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From the Publishers

THE MYSTERY;

OR,

EVIL AND GOD.

BY

JOHN YOUNG, LL.D. (EDIN.)

"Ὅππη γὰρ ἐμὸν νόον ἐιρύσαιμι, εἰς ἓν ταὐτό τε πᾶν ἀνελύετο." *Fragment of Xenophanes.*

PHILADELPHIA:
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THE MYSTERY,

ETC.

IN THREE PARTS.

PART I. THE INFINITE NATURE.

II. "THE INFINITE" IN THE UNIVERSE.

III. THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE INFINITE NATURE HARMONISES WITH THE FACTS OF THE UNIVERSE.

INTRODUCTION.

POSSIBLE KNOWLEDGE—CREATION—MATERIAL, MORAL KINGDOMS—PHYSICAL, MORAL EVIL—MORAL LIBERTY—FOREKNOWLEDGE—FORE-ORDINATION—THE THINKER'S DIFFICULTIES—RECONCILED?—REMOVED?

MODERN philosophy offers to the world, as its latest synthesis, three categories of possible knowledge: Unity, Plurality, and the Relation between these opposites. The first in this eclectic trinity rises above the present investigation, the remaining two categories fall within its self-prescribed limits. Being *per se*, *The* Unconditional, Eternal Being is here assumed, and the attempt is ventured to pass from "The One" to "The All," from "The Infinite," in Himself, as a truth of reason, to the products of His Almighty Will, as they lie open before us, and to His Agency, as a fact in the existing condition and government of the universe.

Manifold questions start up on the first approach

to this region; they are profound, distressing, and dark. What is creation? its nature, its mode, its moment? What is the *final cause* of creation, and of such a creation as exists? Did it originate in a necessity, or in a deliberate choice? Did it originate in pure benevolence, a desire to produce beings fitted for spiritual glory, and surrounded with materials and means adapted to this high end? or was it, owing to a righteous and wise purpose, to exhibit personal excellence, and to secure merited honour? On the same ground, supposing a real and constant Divine action in human affairs, is the governing impulse benevolence or self-manifestation?

The reality of Almighty agency beyond the instant and the act of creation, and the nature of that agency and its extent and its laws, are still questions —questions perhaps undeterminable.

In the two widely separated kingdoms of the existing universe—the material and the moral—is there a distinction as to the agency put forth from above, and if so, what is its precise character?—a distinction between the control exercised over intelligent moral beings and the production of mechanical, chemical, and physiological trains of phenomena?

One of the dark mysteries of our world is physical

evil. Is the fact of its existence reconcilable with "The Moral" in the Infinite Nature, and especially with Infinite Goodness? Moral Evil is a mystery unutterably darker still; it is *the one*, all-embracing mystery of Time. But is there such a thing? What is Moral Evil, strictly, universally? Its essence, its voluntariness or necessariness, its forms, its issue, how shall they be interpreted? Was the entrance of this damned plague into the universe inevitable? Was there no alternative between *no intelligent* creation at all and the *certain* existence of moral evil? Or, although it was possible to have prevented its introduction, did it appear best, on the whole, to Infinite Rectitude and Wisdom, because productive of a larger amount of good than could otherwise have been secured, not to prevent it?

The mystery of Moral Evil opens out into the question of Moral Liberty. Is there such a thing to man as Freedom of Will? What is its essential meaning, what are its conditions, and what its criterion? Man's conscious nature is threefold—sensational, intellectual, and moral. In accordance with his complex constitution, he has desires that belong to his animal organization, others that arise from his rational being, and others that are connected especially with his responsible nature. Besides de-

sires, thus various in kind, he has perceptions and judgments, respecting what is true or false, wise or unwise, useful or hurtful. In addition to these, again, he has moral sentiments and convictions, a sense of right and wrong, an inward persuasion that one thing is binding and another is prohibited. Desires, judgments, and moral convictions constitute his conscious nature. By which of these classes of influences, or by what combination of them, is he governed, in his volitions and actions? Has he, or has he not, the power of determining his own choice? Are his determinations necessary, invariably following, according to a fixed law, the impulse of his desires, or the verdict of his judgment, or the command of his conscience? Or do all these three together affect the decision of his will, and what amount of influence is attributable to each in the final result?

Free agency in man and Divine predetermination, or even fore-knowledge, seem to be mutually destructive. Can they be reconciled? On the one hand, if man be altogether free, must not the events which make up the history of the world be a succession of contingencies? There is an evident doubtfulness involved in man's free choice, for this may take one direction or another indifferently; and, whatever be

its issue, it depends on man himself at the moment. Can any future event be considered certain if man be thus free? Can there be a settled Providence in the world, a fixed course of events, having a sure and determinate aim, if all, nevertheless, be connected with the uncertainty of human volitions? On the other hand, if man be not a free agent, can he be a responsible agent? Moral liberty, moral power, seems to be the condition and the measure of responsibility. So far as a Being is necessitated to any course, has no choice, no power on the one side or the other, he can be the object neither of praise nor blame. The good or the evil of that course must be attributed, not to him, but to the author of the necessity under which he acts.

The dark and complicated phenomena of Providence, as they rise up in the past history of the world, and in its existing condition, are before us. How shall we on the one hand interpret the mental and moral constitution of man, and on the other hand do justice to the supremacy of "The Infinite One," and to the real relations in which *He* stands to creatures? We behold the sufferings and the crimes of men, *both* tremendous in amount, and pressing down on myriads till they fall into the grave. Shall we venture a

suspicion that the pressure may continue even beyond the grave? Terrible calamities are crushing our race, but, worse than all, principles are corrupted, affections are polluted, character is debased, mental and moral perdition is begun. Perhaps perdition extends and deepens for ever. How shall we vindicate the character of the Creator and Ruler in the face of such appalling phenomena, and yet more appalling apprehensions? Why did He give existence to such a world? Why does He continue to suffer such a state of things? Can we reconcile what we behold, even with the rectitude of the Supreme Being, at all events with His goodness; or if with these, how with His infinite wisdom, to which the state of the world seems so violent a contradiction; or if with His Wisdom, yet how with His Infinite Power?

Oh, Thou Only Mighty, who makest strong the weak, empower us to understand and to vindicate Thy ways! Oh, Thou Only Fountain of Wisdom, pour down Thine own light on the course of Thy Providence below! Reveal to us Thy holy path, through the troubled affairs of men! Where Thy footsteps are lost in darkness which we cannot pierce, let us stedfastly believe that Thou yet walkest in unsullied majesty. May no suspicion of Thine Infinite

Perfection darken our heart! Wherever darkness rest, be it still our immoveable faith that "all is Rectitude, and Light, and Love in Thee!"

If there be verily a Providence of God in the world, whatever be its nature, its character, or its sphere, it *can* have its *foundation* only in the attributes of the Mighty Foreseer Himself, in the governing laws of *His* Being. Our first search, therefore, must be directed to the Infinite Nature, especially to "the Moral" in that nature.

From the inner principles and laws of the Eternal Mind we shall pass to their outward development in the actual government of the world.

It will then be necessary to view together the inner principles and their outward development, in order to ascertain whether they be harmonious or discordant.

Our labour here, therefore, separates itself into three distinct spheres: First, the Infinite Nature. Second, "The Infinite" in the Universe. Third, the Harmony of the Infinite Nature with the Facts of the Universe.

PART FIRST.

THE INFINITE NATURE.

Free Working, Reflex of Individual Being — Infinite Perfection — Moral, holiest Region of Divine — Highest Glory — Its Reality — Involved in Intellectual — Virtue Eternal in Eternal Nature — Human Conscience, Infinite Conscience — Excellence in Created, Reflexion of Uncreated — The Infinite, All-Perfect — Father of Souls — Difficulties of Providence — Solved unsolved, Moral Perfection of Infinite abides.

BEING AND WORKING.

FREE *working* is only and ever the reflex of individual *being*. The *Person*, as he is, essentially, morally, never fails to send forth in his *pro*ceedings an unconscious but exact counterpart of himself; so that were we beforehand to ascertain his fixed inner principles, we should be able to predict, with entire certainty, his public course. The INforming soul fashions the structure and inspires the countenance of the *body* of outward manifestation. The search, therefore, into the Infinite Nature, into the attributes, especially the moral attributes, of the Maker and Ruler of the Universe, is preliminary and paramount. We do not, in this way, reach historically the facts of His agency, and, in their seeming, these may distressingly contravene our *à priori* conclusions; but we shall distinctly arrive at the originative and formative cause of these facts. We cannot in this way learn what the Divine Administration of the universe *actually* is, but we shall certainly learn what it must *essentially* be, whatever existing phenomena may *seem* to convey.

The words of the most ancient and holy book in the world meet us here, as at every point of the

great subject which we presume to treat, like a voice of warning from above. They are stirring words in themselves, they are also venerable by their antiquity, and they are still more touchingly solemn by their association with the spiritual history of man—as an utterance of individual sentiment, their appropriateness is felt. "Canst thou by searching find out God, canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? it is deeper than hades, what canst thou know? The measure thereof is longer than the earth and broader than the sea."

Being—Unconditioned, Eternal, Alone!—how shall we ascend to the conception? This much seems certain—IT *must* be *Mental* Being, A Mind. There is a fountain from which all the intelligence diffused throughout the universe has issued. The thinking beings that people the universe with their marvellous and manifold endowments, once, were not. The Eternal willed and they rayed forth, gleams of light from the Uncreated Sun. The mighty principles, that are at work in the creation, the magnificent, complicated, vast designs which it reveals, the beautiful, sublime, grand thoughts which it utters, once, were not—at least in this embodiment. They belonged to the Infinite Mind, and were uttered out

from it. But these, whatever be their grandeur and their number, do not exhaust the opulence of that mind, and do not mark the limit of its possessions. Uncreated Intelligence *must be* Infinite. Why not? Limitation here is gratuitous, groundless; what is more, let the limit which we fix be ever so remote, if there be a limit at all, something beyond is ever possible, that is, Being in a higher form is possible; and we have sunk from the idea of "the ultimate the highest existence," the fountain of all other Being; we have conditioned The Unconditioned, and contradicted and nullified the *sine quâ non* of our own conception. All truth must find its home in the Eternal Mind. All the knowable and all possible power of knowing must dwell there, else we have not fulfilled the necessity imposed by our reason, and have even failed to rise to the highest *conceivable* form of existence. Thrown back on Being, *per se*, Unconditioned, Alone, to limit is to destroy the essential idea. All the not contradictory, that is, all the possible, is here the infallibly true; exaggeration there cannot be, so long as we look only to that which is really great.

But this awful Being, Himself limitless, has and maintains intimate connections with limited natures. Unrelated to time,—for to his existence succession is

impossible,—unrelated, also, to space,—for God is not extended, and is of no magnitude,—He stands, nevertheless, in enduring relation to those who are conditioned both by time and space. He is not far from the creation, but very near—near in His entire Godhood, to every atom, every being. Every atom, every being, exists every moment in His immediate, perfect perception. *He* is the radiant, open, vast Eye of the universe, which never slumbers, never shuts, and which is ever as perfectly percipient of the minutest point as if nothing else were within the range of vision. Magnificent are the inspirations of the ancient bard; and they awaken an echo in the depths of every soul of man: "Whither shall I go from thy spirit or whither shall I flee from thy presence? .... If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me..... If I say surely the darkness shall cover me, even the night shall be light about me. Yea the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to Thee." Yet sublimer and more daring is the fancy of the burdened and soul-rapt prophet. He seems to hear the Eternal speak: "Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself

in secret places, that I shall not see him, saith the Lord? Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?"

Limitation, on no side, is possible to the Highest; All-Present, All-Seeing, All-Powerful, All-Knowing, and All-Wise, *He* must be. But His Physical Attributes, with all their glory, are both less questioned than His Moral Perfections, and far less related to the purpose of this investigation. We have to do with the "Moral" rather than the "Physical" in the Infinite Nature. This region is unutterably sacred,—like another "Holy of Holies," the innermost recess of the Uncreated Temple. There is a sanctity here, to which the hush of perfect silence and the worship of pure thought, too deep for articulate expression, are alone congenial. The susceptible and awakened soul is struck with the profoundest awe in this unfrequented and mysterious spot. To be morally excellent is a higher elevation than to be physically or intellectually great. Physical and even intellectual excellences are not to be compared with spiritual virtues. The moral, indeed, must have its basis in the intellectual, and is ever elevated in worth, with the intellectual stature and strength. The security and the power of virtue, as a governing principle in the soul, are determined by

the character of the understanding; and the better instructed and the more enlightened the intellect, the stronger and the sounder is the growth of all those higher principles which have their root in this soil. But *moral* worth takes rank far above all mere *intellectual* greatness. It is the bloom and flower of the spiritual nature, the charm and the crown of the rational being. The Physical Omnipotence of the Uncreated One, and even his Omniscience and his Infinite Wisdom, belong to a lower scale than his Rectitude, his Truth, and his Love. No intricate principles of valuation, no lengthened processes of arithmetic are needed in order to reach this conclusion; it is an intuitive and universal judgment. Spiritual worth is the highest glory of any rational nature; in the *Divine* Nature it is *this* which presents the strongest claim to the admiration, the reverence, and the love of all creatures. Wherever intrusion may be lawful, at least no unhallowed tread must be suffered to violate *this* region; the very last of many things, not to be dared in connection with God, is the remotest suspicion affecting the hidden principles of His Moral Being.

The Perfect Virtue of the Supreme Mind offers a noble opportunity of elevated, freshening, and sanctifying illustration. The field is inexhaustibly in-

teresting, and the labour would be abundantly remunerative, to take up separately the eternal and immutable principles of Moral Excellence, and to exhibit their place in the Infinite Nature. But it falls to us rather, to deal with the reality and perfection of Spiritual Excellence in God, *as the necessary and the only foundation* of those great laws by which the administration of the universe must be guided. It is enough to touch the "summa fastigia rerum," to *suggest* without pursuing trains of thought which admit of indefinite extension, and contain, also, the germs of many a profound and vexed speculation. The more willingly a limit is imposed here, because it is in a later stage of the discussion that most minds will feel acutely the pressure of difficulty—difficulty on some sides insurmountable. *Here* the necessity is to cherish and strengthen, rather than to create, conviction and sympathy; for, thus far, the disciples and the rejectors of written Revelation are nearly at one.

The first and best of English Theists, Lord Herbert, devoutly recognises the *rectitude, purity, and goodness* of the Supreme; indeed, his profound, childlike veneration of God, and his humility and earnestness, are most touching. The brother of George Herbert, but for his strange rejection of the

Divine Word, was not unlike, in spirit, the poet of "the Temple." Lord Shaftesbury, more elegant and accomplished than Herbert, but less profound, religiously and morally, does not violate the holier region of the Divine. With all his errors, he upholds the essential distinction between right and wrong, even warms into nobility of sentiment when he describes the beauty of virtue, and adores the wisdom, justice, and benevolence that preside in the government of the world. Chubb wants the grace (not the force) of the aristocratic defenders of Theism, and offends by a peculiar aridity, hardness, and coldness. He also refuses the idea of a particular providence, which the others did not. But even he does not impugn the moral excellence of the Almighty; and in his supplement to "the previous question," inserts in the title "wherein the moral character of God is more fully vindicated." * Lord Bolingbroke, sparkling, piquant, masterly, but splenetic and malignant, oversteps the limits which had been marked by Herbert and Shaftesbury, and assumes a more irreverent and defiant front. His views of providence, and even of immortality, are more than suspicious; and the doctrine of future rewards and punishments

* London, 1725.

he throws aside without disguise. Ostensibly, his rejection of this arises from the desire to maintain the character of God; and very ingeniously he charges theologians with blaspheming the Almighty, and misrepresenting the condition of the world and the conduct of providence, in order to found an argument for a future state. With his false views of a judgment to come, and also of moral obligation and of the nature of virtue, it is not wonderful that his scepticism should seem to extend even to God. But even he never denied the Divine moral character; he could not. On the contrary, he upheld it very distinctly and decidedly, but he sought to becloud it and so to envelope it in mystery that it should no longer serve the purposes of artificial theology. "The Divine (moral) attributes," he says*, "are exercised in such innumerable relations, absolutely unknown to us, that though we are sure the exercise of them in the immensity of the universe is always directed by the All-Perfect Being to that which is fittest on the whole, yet the notions of created beings, like us, who see them in one relation alone, cannot be applied to them with any propriety, nor with any certainty, sufficient to make them objects of imita-

* Bolingbroke's Works, vol. iii. p. 412. London, 1754.

tion." Again: "As little can we rise from *our* moral obligations to His (God's) supposed moral attributes. I call them *supposed*, because after all that has been said to prove a necessary connection between His physical and His moral attributes, the latter may all be absorbed in His wisdom." * Again: "God is, in *their* (theologians') notions of Him, nothing more than an infinite man. He knows as we know, is wise as we are wise, and moral as we are moral." † Again: "His (Dr. Sam. Clarke's) whole chain of reasoning, from the moral attributes downwards, is nothing more than one continued application of moral human ideas to the designs and conduct of God." ‡ Again: "They (divines) parcel out a divine moral nature into various attributes like the human, and determine precisely what these attributes require that God should do, to make His will conformable to the eternal ideas of fitness." § With all this, Bolingbroke does not deny Absolute Moral Perfection as necessarily belonging to the Almighty. The very reverse. He will not, indeed, admit that this is the ground of moral obligation; and hence asserts that virtue in God must be so entirely different from virtue in us, that we are not justified

* Vol. iv. p. 18. † P. 296.
‡ Vol. v. p. 5. § P. 77.

in reasoning from the one to the other. But he distinctly and strongly upholds the Perfect Excellence of God. "It required," says he, "no such metaphysical apparatus as Clarke employed, somewhat tediously, to prove that all perfections, natural and moral, must be attributes of the self-existent, all-perfect author of all being; but he does not prove what he asserts, and on the proof of which his whole argument turns, that these attributes are the same in God as they are *in our ideas*." * "A necessary connection between the natural and moral attributes of God, no man who believes in Him will deny; all the perfections of an all-perfect being must be consistent and connected; to be otherwise, would be imperfection." † "They (Theists) ascribe all conceivable perfections to God, moral and physical, which can belong to a divine nature and to a supreme being." ‡ "Supposing the world we inhabit to be a scene of as many evils as it is represented to be, the arguments drawn from thence against the wisdom, or power, or *goodness* of God are inconclusive." § After describing the condition of mankind, Lord Bolingbroke says: "What could we ask more of a *beneficent* Creator? Let us adore His goodness and His justice (if we

* Vol. iv. p. 249.
† P. 224.
‡ P. 298.
§ Vol. v. p. 1.

will ascribe our ideas of moral attributes to Him) as well as His wisdom and His power." * "He (the Theist) is as far from denying them (the moral attributes) as he is from denying the wisdom and the power of God." "He acknowledges whatever God has done to be just and good in itself, though it does not appear such in every instance, conformably to *his* ideas of justice and goodness." † "God is infinitely wise; He does always that which is fittest to be done. That which is fittest to be done is always just and good, and the dispute is over." ‡

"The dispute, indeed, *is* over; the Moral is no less essential and real than the Intellectual nature of the Great Being; the one is necessarily involved in the other. Virtue *is* wisdom — wisdom applied to the highest sphere of thought and of volition; vice is always folly, utter folly and irrationality. Intelligence, pure, mere intelligence, eternally dissociated from spiritual principles, perceptions, and sympathies, is inconceivable. The idea, besides, is perfectly gratuitous, sustained by no experience, and suggested by no plausible reason. One shall say, the lower animals exhibit signs of intellect, though they unquestionably have no moral faculty, no

* Vol. v. p. 112. † Vol. iv. p. 299. ‡ P. 300.

responsible nature. But this is *their imperfection, their degradation:* it is felt by all, and acknowledged to be their imperfection, their degradation. In short, the reality of moral perceptions and judgments in the Divine Being is argued precisely on the grounds which sustain our belief in His Wisdom and Knowledge, and, in point of fact, as we have seen, none who have any consistent idea of an *Intelligent* First Cause are found to deny the *Moral* Nature, the Moral Perfection of that Cause.

The old, well-tried and solid, but hard and arid argument, must not be overlooked here. *Virtue*, as conceived by our minds, necessarily generates the idea of the existence of a Virtuous Being. *The thing itself*, in its essential elements, we see and know intuitively, must be eternal and immutable. With the same certainty with which we believe that there is within us a faculty of moral intuition, we are convinced that Virtue, never was, and never can be, other than it is, that it is independent of all circumstances, times, and beings,—an everlasting, unchangeable *reality*.* But itself is simply an attribute, a mode of Being, not a Being; and it has, therefore, and can

* Clarke's Evid. of Rev. Religion, pp. 40—46. London, 1716.

have, no real existence, out of conception, except in a substance, a subject: itself, as an attribute, eternal, it *presumes* the existence of an eternal nature, in which it resides—an infinitely righteous, truthful, loving, and pure nature, of which, though not the product, it must have been the everlasting possession and glory. "It is all one," says Cudworth, in his lumbering but strong way, "to affirm that there are eternal essences of things and verities necessarily existing (he himself applies this to *moral* as well as intellectual entities), and to say that there is an Infinite, Eternal Mind, necessarily existing; they are nothing but modifications of mind or intellect, and therefore the First Intellect (we add, Moral Nature) is essentially and archetypally such essences and verities." *

Conscience in man guides us, in a silent but quite resistless way, up to the Uncreated, Infinite Conscience, the Eternal Sense of right and wrong, the Eternal dwelling of Spiritual Attributes, convictions, and principles. The Creator cannot have implanted in the human breast a sense of virtue and of vice, an appreciation, an admiration, a love of what is

* Cudworth's Eternal and Immutable Morality. Works, vol. iii. p. 628. London, 1845.

spiritually excellent, while He Himself is destitute of this quality. If man be so constituted that he approves and admires right, and condemns (even though he be capable of perpetrating) wrong, man's Maker must Himself be virtuous; never could He have created a nature which is compelled by its very constitution to despise and hate Him, if He be not morally excellent. This is not all—the excellences and powers that are found in creatures descended from the Creator as their original source; it is impossible that a single virtue can exist in them which has not its only origin in Him. The workmanship reveals, in its structure, the qualities of the artificer: He who endowed man with moral powers must himself be a moral being. All the goodness of creatures is an impartation from Him —a reflection of His uncreated excellence—*only a reflection*; and reflected light is not comparable with direct unborrowed effulgence. Virtue in man is mediate, derived, limited; virtue in the Maker is immediate, original, Infinite. The Infinite Nature is necessarily Infinite in all its properties and powers, —Moral, no less than Intellectual or Physical,— and whatever spiritual grace is found in it must exist in the highest possible degree. In a sphere which knows no beginning, no end, no change, limitation

on any side is impossible, but, above all, on that side which reaches to the most sacred depths of Divine Being. The contrary supposition is perfectly gratuitous, it is ruinous. The slightest taint of falsehood, injustice, impurity, malevolence in the Infinite, is not only without ground from within or from without, but it would involve the most disastrous consequences to the universe—consequences which do not follow, in fact, but the very reverse of which we behold everywhere. Such a thing believed, even suspected, there could be no security for good anywhere, evermore, and no refuge from the dread of evil; trust in God, or between man and man, would be impossible. We return with entire assurance to the general argument—if, in reference to any property or power, in any direction, we should imagine limitation in the Infinite, if we should admit the possibility that there might be something higher and better than *His* Nature, that moment we should fall from the essential conditions of the idea of the Highest Being, the fountain of all other Being, beyond whom there is nothing to be conceived. In Him, all *the possible* is the *absolutely true:* every possible excellence, and every excellence in the highest possible degree, must glow in His Pure and Effulgent Nature. Infinite Recti-

tude, Infinite Purity, Infinite Benevolence, Infinite Truth, Infinite Moral Beauty and Worth, must find in Him their original, Eternal abode.

Last of all, in the essential relation in which He stands to the human race, we have a ground of security for the rectitude and benevolence of His administration, additional to that which arises from His spiritual attributes, in themselves considered. He is the *Father* of Minds, and His treatment of them *must* be parental. Beyond the claims of Rectitude, or even Benevolence, we cannot err in believing that He must be infinitely merciful and tender, as a Father to his own offspring.

On the ground of general reasoning, the difficulty of satisfying the reflecting and the candid is by no means great. Indeed, it is not *here* chiefly, or at all, that difficulty is felt; it is in the sphere of experience and of fact. The existing condition of this world, it is said, is irreconcilable with an Infinite Governing power. There are such revolting inequalities in the system of things, such an amount of crime, on the one hand, and such desolating calamities, such enormous and universal suffering, on the other hand, that it is hard to retain a steady confidence in the Rectitude, and still more in the Good-

ness, of the Supreme Ruler, or, if in these, at all events in His Wisdom and His Power.

The aim of our investigation is to exhibit the harmony between the true Doctrine of the Infinite and the Facts of the Universe. But while pursuing this aim we must suggest that no inability on the part of man to solve the difficulties of the case can justify *even suspicion, far less disbelief*, of the essential moral attributes of the Supreme. Reason will pronounce that the cause of such inability must lie in ourselves, in the limitation of our faculties and of our knowledge, and will judge that, with *higher powers* and *more comprehensive views*, we might behold only harmony where now we see disorder, and only consistency where now we find irreconcilable contradiction.

Aided by the hints which have been thrown out, we *can* understand what the principles on which the Administration of the Universe is conducted, *must necessarily be;* and Reason demands, all contrary appearances notwithstanding, that we recognise this transcendent necessity, and hold fast the doctrine of Infinite Moral Perfection. The principles of the Divine Working *can* have their origin only in the Divine Nature, and *must be* entirely and perfectly

consistent with its moral attributes. They *must be—necessarily must be*—not only those of perfect wisdom and justice, but of perfect sincerity and ingenuousness, of pure generosity and disinterestedness. Not only can there be no unrighteousness and no folly with the Supreme, but there can be no duplicity, no deceptive concealment, no putting forth of a pretext while the real ground lurks behind, no selfishness, not even indifference to the interests of the humblest creature, nothing but pure transparency, but irrepressible righteousness and goodness in all His ways.

The Rectitude, Veracity, Purity, Benevolence, and, withal, Paternity of the Divine Being, we take, as first principles, Eternal, Immutable Truths. Even if we be unable to comprehend the consistency of these truths with the phenomena of the Universe, they are not, therefore, the less truths; and we shall no more think of denying the truths because of the phenomena, than of suspecting the reality of the phenomena because of the truths. Right Reason commands and compels us, in the face of whatever difficulties, to hold fast the Infinite Moral Perfection of the Su

preme Governor of the Universe. It is impossible that He can do anything that is not morally excellent and beautiful, worthy of the approbation, the admiration, and the veneration of all His intelligent creatures.

PART SECOND.

"THE INFINITE" IN THE UNIVERSE.

IN THREE CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I. THE INFINITE ONE CREATING.
II. THE INFINITE ONE IN THE KINGDOM OF MATTER.
III. THE INFINITE ONE IN THE KINGDOM OF SPIRIT.

CHAPTER I.

THE INFINITE ONE CREATING.

His First Act *outwards*—Incomprehensible, not contradictory to reason—"The Unconditioned"—Non-Being, unconditioned—Hegel's Axiom—The Infinite, the Eternal Positive—Pantheism, contradictory—Cousin—Fact of Creation, alone—Locke—Thoughts *our* Creations—Mind, Matter, Divine Creations.

EXISTENCE BEGINNING.

THE First Act of Being, *outwards*, plunges us in unfathomable mystery. *The idea*, of which the generic term, Creation, is the accepted sign, it is for ever impossible for us to grasp; it belongs to Infinity, to a distinctive forthgoing of power properly Infinite. One or two faltering steps, towards the abysmal secret, we venture to take with trembling and awe.

Creation is not something rising up out of absolute nonentity. It assumes existence *in one form*, it supposes Being, Being Infinite and Eternal—but only this. As the act of the Eternal One, Creation is not the bringing of something *out of* nothing, as if nothing were either the material or the place, out of which something is brought.* It is not the conversion of nothing into something, as if nothing were a kind of substratum on which the Infinite Power acted. But, so far as we are capable of conceiving and embodying it, Creation is "causing existence to begin;" an instant ago, it is supposed, there was absolutely

* Cudworth's Intell. Sys. vol. iii. sec. ii. chap. v. London, 1845.

nothing save the Infinite Life, but *this instant* something else has begun to be.

The idea which is thus expressed is altogether incomprehensible, but we are justified in affirming that it is not contradictory. It has never been shown—it can never be shown—to be contradictory; it stands *opposed* to no fact of experience, and no legitimate deduction from experience, and to no principle or conclusion of reason. Incomprehensible it is, like everything else belonging to Infinity, but not contradictory, and therefore not impossible; and if it be only not impossible, it must be true, for it offers the *only* believable ground on which the facts of the universe can be interpreted. Either Creation is a reality, and the Eternal Unconditioned Being has *caused* all other existence, or all that now exists is Everlasting and Independent. If there be a single atom not eternal, the creation of this involves all the difficulty and incomprehensibility of the creation of a universe. That difficulty is not one of quantity, of degree, but of kind. Creation at all, not its extent, but Creation, to any extent, causing existence to begin where before there was absolutely nothing, constitutes the entire difficulty here. The choice, therefore, is *only* between these two things, existence *caused* by the Eternal "One," or the Eternity

of *all* Matter, even to the smallest atom. This last, it could easily be shown, involves contradictions direct and numberless, which it would outrage reason to admit. Creation, on the other hand, Reason has no alternative but to accept. Mysterious, incomprehensible as it is, it *must* be true. It is the only, —absolutely the only—admissible solution of the facts of the Universe.

Once, the Universe, as we speak, was not, and "The Eternal" existed alone. We strive to go back in thought, to Absolute Being, Unconditioned Being. Continental philosophy professes to take *this* as its starting point, and to evolve the Universe consequentially from its Primitive Centre. But the starting point has ever been an assumption: that which is first, in reality, is the last which we reach. Profoundly the German mind has speculated on the awful subject of Ontology, and not ingloriously, if we regard some of the living, lustrous, mighty thoughts to which it has given birth, but how vainly if we look to the sober and solid determination of the life—and death—questionings of the human soul. In the region, for example, into which we are now daring to pierce, the Eternal past, when the Infinite, the Unconditioned, existed alone, we are met by that first axiom of the Hegelian philosophy,

"Das Seyn ist Das Nichts." * With instinctive horror we shrink back from the merciless paradox—the blasphemy. The aphorism, indeed, has a meaning, a profound meaning: Absolute Being and Absolute Nothing *are* comparable; both are *unconditioned.* Non-entity is unconditioned, absolutely so. But, even in the very act of conceiving, we do convert nothing into something. It is unconditioned, because it is nothing, but in joining with it a qualifying term we destroy it;—it *is* nothing, *has* nothing; no substance, no qualities, no definition, no conception even. It is pure negation,—*the* negation of all reality and of all conceptivity.

Unconditioned *Being* is reality, the truest and awfullest reality. *It* is, indeed, unconditioned, as we now strive to conceive it, before creation; unconditioned *ab extra.* It is unconditioned Infinity. But it is not therefore a negative, but a positive; Infinity is the highest positive, and Finity is the true negative, though it be verbally and grammatically positive. Infinity is the Everlasting Positive. The Unconditioned in the Eternal Past, Alone, before creation, is Infinite self-consciousness and self-government, having, not nothing, but a real nature, as

* Die Lehre vom Seyn, § 87. Seite 99., Encyclopädie. Heidelberg, 1827.

its sphere. It is Eternal Reason, not as a slumbering potentiality, but as an Infinite Activity, ranging indeed through an *inner* domain, but that domain boundless, inexhaustible in possessions and in powers, the dwelling of Infinite Truth and Infinite Excellence.

The attempt is worse than vain to conceive of Creation as an Eternal, rather than a Temporal, act. The idea is as old as Aristotle, — perhaps as Plato. Certainly the followers of Plato broadly asserted it, if he did not. Eternal Creation, whether viewed as an irresistible and Eternal *Necessity* of the Divine Nature, or as a *voluntary* yet Eternal *emanation* and *impartation*, is self-contradictory. It is of the same kind with Eternal Succession or Eternal Change. Creation is an act, and, as such, presupposes an Actor prior to itself. And if the act of Creation were Eternal, the thing created must, on the same ground, be eternal also. Matter must be eternal, and we must resign ourselves to all the contradictions from which the doctrine of Creation is the proper and the only escape. Eternal Creation, like Eternal Succession, is a contradiction in terms.

If Creation be not and cannot be Eternal, the words earlier or later can have no application to it. Let it have occurred sixty thousand ages, or sixty

thousand myriads of ages, or sixty thousand times sixty thousand myriads of ages ago, the difference is not even as the dust in the balance. In sober truth, there *is* no difference, and there *can* be none. Creation, whensoever realised, is alike amidst the All-encompassing, Infinite, Indivisible, Eternity, which has no beginning, no end, no parts, from which it is alike ever absolutely separated, and to which it can never be either near or remote, to which indeed, in its being and mode, alike, it can *in this respect* sustain no relation whatever, but must always abide an essentially different and opposite thing. On the one hand, the All-encompassing Eternal is, ever was, and ever will be, Alone, Unchangeable, untouched, unreached by Creation. On the other hand, Creation is also, in its sphere, alone, apart, wholly "*sui generis*." It is, for the first time, in the universe, *a* beginning, when before there was never a beginning. It is *the* beginning of a new mode of existence, and of a new series of existences; a source and scene of *changes*, when, ever before, no change was possible; the *only* scene of changes, for to the Infinite Necessary Existence change is contradiction, would be destruction. Creation is the beginning of space, introducing an order of existences to which, for the first time, the relations of magnitude and number were possible. It is the

beginning of time, introducing an order of existences whose duration was limitable and measurable. It is the beginning of all derived, dependent, finite Being.

The Creation, in all its parts, in this view of it, stands essentially and infinitely removed from the Eternal Self-existent Mind, its Author. Between these two there can only be for ever a measureless separation. And thus, Pantheism is not a mere fallacy, it is an absurdity, and does no other than merge the Creator in the Creation, making *Him* not a separate, still less an independent, existence, but The All; The All *are* God and God *is* The All. Or it supposes a Substans, a Substratum, One sole Personality, and all else to be only successive and varying manifestations of the One Personalty. The true doctrine of Creation shows that this is nothing less than an impossible and self-contradictory confounding of the Infinite with the Finite, of the Eternal with the Temporal.

With unfeigned humility, exception must be taken to the views of M. Cousin on this great subject. One who, if not himself the first, at least after Sir William Hamilton, stands pre-eminent in Europe as a philosopher, who has done such service, not to the philosophy of his own country only, but to philosophy as a world-wide heritage of man, deserves

genuine reverence, and any sentiments of his ought to be treated with the deepest consideration. Besides, where the subject itself is so abstract, and the reasoner is so profound a metaphysician, we may not thoroughly understand what is designed to be conveyed. Still *the language* which M. Cousin employs must be reprobated, because it is so susceptible of a mischievous interpretation; nay, we must maintain that, to all ordinary minds, in its obvious meaning, it does support an error with which, nevertheless, he himself is certainly not chargeable. Unquestionably, *he* is no Pantheist. He maintains unequivocally that God is Cause, and the Universe effect; that God is the Infinite Cause, and the Universe a Finite Effect, and that the two are therefore absolutely and for ever separate. But what is the meaning of the words, "God creates; he creates in virtue of his creative power, and he draws the Universe *not from Nonentity*, but *from himself*, who is Absolute Existence. His distinguishing characteristic being an absolute creating force, which cannot but pass into act, it follows, not that the creation is possible, but that it is necessary; it follows that, since God is creating ceaselessly and infinitely, creation is inexhaustible and sustains itself

perpetually."* We do not refer to that necessity, which is here represented as governing God in creating, though it is difficult to dissociate this from a denial of liberty to the Divine Agent. The accomplished American translator of Cousin's Critique of Locke, Dr. Henry, of New York University †, maintains that all the necessity, for which M. Cousin argues, is a necessity relative to our conceptions only, while the Infinite Cause is personally altogether free. But what can the words mean, "God draws the universe, *not from nonentity* but *from himself*, who is Absolute Existence?" *In* Himself there can be only Divinity. *From* Himself He can draw only Divinity. Is not this to make the universe divine, Creation the Uncreated, the All but a modification and manifestation of "The One?" This surely can be distinguished by no name more appropriate than Pantheism.

* "Dieu crée donc : il crée en vertu de sa puissance créatrice, il tire le monde, non du néant qui n'est pas, mais de lui-même qui est l'existence absolue. Son caractère éminent étant une force créatrice absolue qui ne peut pas ne pas passer à l'acte, il suit non que la création est possible, mais qu'elle est nécessaire ; il suit que Dieu créant sans cesse et infiniment, la création est inépuisable et se maintient constamment."—*Cours de Philol., Leçon Ve.* Paris, 1828.

† Preface, p. 13.

It is perilous, and always vain, to speculate on the act of Creation and its mode; the attempt to render it comprehensible is suicidal; for ever, as belonging to the region of the Infinite, must the conception be for us impossible. There are no analogies to guide or help our minds. The fact of Creation stands absolutely solitary. At the same time there *are* some things in our individual mental history which, so far as they reach, in the way of remote illustration, are not to be overlooked. Our thoughts and volitions, for example, are, in a modified sense, *our creations.** They are real entities, which had no previous existence till they were called into being by our minds. But it cannot escape us, that not only the occasions, but often the materials of our thoughts and volitions, are furnished from without. Mr. Locke has with great felicity brought forward another fact (for *such* we hold it to be), which has the advantage of bringing Creation, *as a Divine act*, near to our present experience, and of presenting it, not in the remote past, but literally realised every hour,—the fact *of the constant creation of human souls.* As it respects

* Cousin: Cours de l'Histoire de la Philosophie, tom. ii. pp. 129—143.

matter, creation is, to our conception, only past. There are endless changes and transformations of matter; but, so far as our knowledge and observation reach, there is no new creation of a single particle. We have no evidence, and, therefore, no belief of such a thing. But there must be a never-ceasing creation of human souls. "That frame of particles (he is speaking of the human body) is not you, it makes not that thinking thing you are .... therefore, when did that thinking being begin to be? If it did never begin to be, then have you always been a thinking thing from eternity; the absurdity whereof I need not confute till I meet with one who is so void of understanding as to own it. If, therefore, you can allow a thinking thing to be made out of nothing, as all things that are not eternal must be, why also can you not allow it possible for a material being to be made out of nothing, by an equal power, but that you have the experience of the one in view, and not of the other? Though, when well considered, creation of a spirit will be found to require no less power than the creation of matter. Nay, possibly, if we would emancipate ourselves from vulgar notions, and raise our thoughts as far as they would reach to a closer contemplation of things, we might be able

to aim at some dim and seeming conception how matter might at first be made and begin to exist, by the power of that Eternal First Being; but to give beginning and being to a spirit would be found a more inconceivable effect of omnipotent power."*

Perhaps this estimate of conceivableness is questionable; the ground on which it is supported is not exhibited, and there are some obvious circumstances that strongly favour quite the opposite conclusion. Minds bear a resemblance to the Infinite Mind, which matter does not. They, like that Mind, are spiritual, rational, moral beings. Their nature and their properties are manifestly allied to those of the Eternal, though the distance be still measureless between the finite and the Infinite, the created and the Uncreated. The act of creation, *causing something to begin to be* — this, in any form, is utterly incomprehensible by us; and perhaps it is idle to talk of degrees of incomprehensibility. But were the notion of gradation admissible, we should maintain that the creation of minds was more easily conceived than the creation of matter, which is so

* Essay on Hum. Under. book IV. chap. X. p. 18.

far removed in its nature from the Creator. On the same ground also, if we dared to speculate on such a subject, we should imagine the earliest creations in the universe to have been creations of spirits, finite likenesses of the Self-existent. Perhaps the first cycles of Time, vast in their stretch, beyond our power to imagine, measured the duration of myriads of pure and noble minds. Perhaps the creation of matter was a far later manifestation of Infinite Power, when beings of a compound nature were summoned into existence, endowed with organs and faculties, to which this new product was adapted. Whensoever it was, we are ready to grant, to any who put forward this difficulty, that the creation of matter is *more*, *not less*, inconceivable by us, than the creation of mind.

What matter itself is we know not, but its properties and powers are essentially opposite, "*toto genere*," to those of mind. From *the Infinite* Mind matter in its nature must stand yet more perfectly distinct. It has even been argued that, since the effect cannot possess qualities which are not in the cause, and since the effect, in this instance, is material, the cause must be material also; or if the Infinite One be purely spiritual, then matter can

be no creation, but must have existed eternally. It is admitted readily that the effect can never exceed the cause, can never possess what the cause has not power to impart; but it is distinctly denied that the effect *must* be only a form or mode of the cause. In this case creation, whether of matter or mind, were absolutely impossible. It would follow, that an Infinite Cause could produce only an infinite effect, which is an express contradiction and absurdity. But it is not necessary that the effect should be of the *same nature* with the cause. It is indeed necessary that there should be in the cause power to produce the effect, but this is all that is absolutely necessary. The only question, therefore, here is, Has "the Infinite" power to create matter? Is the creation of matter, that is, of visible, tangible substance, impossible? Does it involve a contradiction? These questions we have already asked and answered; and can here only repeat that while the creation of matter is incomprehensible, it is not contradictory. To no facts or conclusion of experience, and to no principle of reason, is it centradictory; not being contradictory, it is possible to One who is Infinite; and being possible, it is certainly true, because it affords the only rational solution of existing facts. Matter can-

not be eternal. This is directly contradictory and impossible. The Oldest, the Primitive form of *Being*, is mind, the exhaustless Fount of all other being. Mind, the One Reigning Mind, is Eternal. All else is created, dependent, finite.

CHAPTER II.

THE INFINITE ONE IN THE KINGDOM OF MATTER.

UNCREATED AND CREATED—FIRST RELATIONSHIP—CREATING AND GOVERNING, THEIR CONNECTION—ALMIGHTY AGENCY A UNIVERSAL NECESSITY—PHYSICAL LAWS NECESSITATE IDEA OF WILL IN COMBINATION WITH POWER—GOD'S UNIVERSAL PRESENCE AND WORKING—"THE ONE" REIGNING OVER ALL.

UNCONDITIONED AND CONDITIONED.

THE Uncreated is separated *Infinitely* from the Creation, but the two are connected, nevertheless, intimately and indissolubly connected, and we have the highest proof of the reality of this fact, though we are incapable of comprehending its mode. They stand in the relation of cause and effect; the Almighty will of the Uncreated gave being to the Creation. This moment *it* was not; the Eternal was alone; beside Him there was only the illimitable non-being; the next moment the Creation was; *new* being, not composed of pre-existing materials, not formed out of God, a portion of His nature, an impartation from within, but another and new existence, the product of His creative volition, therefore belonging to Him inalienably, His property by a right of tenure absolutely unparalleled—of which no analogy exists, or can exist—His property, because wholly and only his product.

But is there no connection between the conditioned and "the Unconditioned," the created and the Uncreated, beyond that which is involved in the solitary fact of creation? Did the connection terminate as it began, with an event which belongs to the unapproachable past? Once, ages ago, too

remote to be calculated, Divine Volition and Divine Power were put forth. Since that unascertainable moment have they reposed evermore? Matter, with its forces and laws, Mind, with its susceptibilities and capacities, sprang forth at the bidding of the Supreme; were they, then, for ever abandoned to themselves—the Creator resting, as from the unbeginning Eternity, in the infinite sufficiency of His own Being; and *they*, having received their original commission, forthwith fulfilling it, pursuing a fixed, inevitable path of self-development, without oversight, interest, or control of any kind on the part of the Great Maker?

Perhaps, the Universe with all its materials, and properties, and powers once existing, a continued Divine Working in it is unnecessary and therefore not to be presumed. Many of its operations, besides, are so minute and so insignificant, that it would seem to degrade the Infinite Majesty to be connected with them, even cognizant of them. Perhaps, also, the events which have taken place in our world, and which are taking place every hour, are of such a nature that it would be fatal to the character of the Supreme Being if his hand were in any way concerned in them. Perhaps there is such an amount of crime and of suffering

here, such disorder and tumult, that *His* unsullied purity and untroubled serenity are unbelievable, if he acted a constant part in human affairs.

On grounds like these it is concluded, that the Great Being is *altogether apart* from the Universe, in His Active Power, His Volitions, His Affections, and almost His Observation. Beyond its first creation, and its various endowments at its creation, He has had no connection with it. Since that moment, His personal agency has never been put forth in it, and as He is for ever unreached by all its changes, so is he for ever uninterested in them.

We hold that there is, at least, one important fact which this sweeping conclusion overlooks—the creation of human souls.* The evidence is familiar and conclusive to most minds, by which this fact is established. If it be true, not only Divine agency, but Divine creative agency, is put forth every hour of every day. Human souls are new creations, and, if no otherwise, in this way at least, the Supreme is directly and profoundly involved in the course of events in our world. So far as *we* on this earth are concerned, He is not remote, but most near, and the very greatest events that take place here are the sole and direct work of His Hand.

* Lock's Essay, ut suprà.

The common, popular argument against the presumption of a Universe deserted by its Maker, is conclusive and entirely satisfactory; that on no valid ground can it be degrading for Him to act in that, however apparently insignificant, which it did not degrade Him to create. In the minutest and meanest of created things, there lie the intelligible traces of power and wisdom, and even goodness. The All-Seeing looks not with shame, but with serene complacency, on the workmanship of his hands, and beholds a glory, not hidden even from our imperfect vision, in the infinitely little, as well as in the magnificently grand. Nor is the thought remote, that what we call *the trivial*, are so constantly mixed up with the *more important* operations and changes of nature, so identified with them, so essential to them, and do so often constitute their very source and cause, that either there is no positive Divine action in nature at all, or that action must be universal. It is impossible, that it should be limited to what we distinguish as the grander and more significant movements.

As for the dark, moral aspects of the Universe,—the suffering, the tumult, and the crime,—these will come under review in another stage of our search; in the meantime it is enough to say that they are

in no way illuminated, by simply denying an actual Divine Providence. The Most High must at least be cognizant of them, unless we deny to him the attribute of Omniscience; and were it possible for them to disturb His serenity, this result would be as inseparable from the mere observation of them as from a direct agency in human affairs. This world could not become less God's creation, by his merely forsaking it, however utterly. He may or He may not take part in its affairs; but in whatever sense its evils bear upon His character, *that* is determined as completely by the act of creation, as by the continued agency of Providence. It is even quite possible that Providence, intsead of more deeply implicating The Holy One, may be the efficient instrument of mitigating the evils, which without blame in the Creator, have arisen in the creation; an idea, we hope to show, which admits of the most abundant confirmation.

The hypothesis remains, that the universe, with its materials and properties and powers once existing, a continued presence and working of God are not needed, and therefore are not to be supposed.

In meeting this hypothesis, so far as it touches a Physical Providence, it is necessary to refer to the true meaning of the expression, powers and laws of

matter. When we speak of mechanical, chemical, and physiological laws, as governing certain classes of phenomena, the idea conveyed is, that matter in certain circumstances undergoes certain changes, and that everywhere and always it undergoes the same changes, the circumstances being the same. But it is conveyed besides that the ground of this constancy is *law*, that is, a fixed order, not caprice, not contingency, not uncertainty; but distinct, determinate, inviolable arrangement. But whose arrangement? The word law—and the thought of which it is the sign—we maintain refers us back from itself to its origin and author. It contains two ideas, Will and Power; a law (if the word be really meant for anything and be not a mere blind to our ignorance) is expressed Will and exerted Power. If the well-established conclusion of Science be that all the operations and changes of matter are invariable, and to our apprehension necessary; indicating no such thing as contingency, irregularity, caprice; when it is added that this is *their law*, the *real* meaning, we maintain, can be no other than this, that some *will* chooses that it *should* be so, and some *power* secures that it *shall* be so. The earth, the mineral and the metal, the solid, the liquid and the gas, the inorganic and the organic substance, the vegetable and the

animal, all have their *fixed laws*, in perfect harmony with which they never fail to act; that is, if the language have any meaning, every one of them, in all its changes, evinces the presence of an unalterable Will and an irresistible Power. But, as distinctly, the will and the power are not theirs, and cannot be contained *in them*, but *must* and *can only* belong to a *Being*.

That unknown substratum, on which the laws of nature terminate, and all whose forms and products are simply the various effects of the operation of these laws, has no will and not less certainly it has, in itself, no power. Our globe, for example, has a motion upon its own axis, and it has, also, another motion around the sun; on the one hand, there is a principle, in virtue of which it is ever repelled from the central orb; and, on the other hand, there is a principle, in virtue of which it is ever drawn in exactly the contrary direction, and the result is, a nearly circular orbit. This is *the law* of the earth and the sun. But the only intelligible meaning, we maintain, is that some living Being wills that the two *should* thus act and re-act on one another,—a Being who has also power sufficient to secure that they *shall* thus act and re-act. No sane man imagines that there is a consciousness, still less a volition, in

the earth or in the sun. *They* have no purpose, no choice in their movements. The *will*, the *purpose*, *must* be in the Great Being, altogether and only in *Him*. And, in like manner, the *force* (as we speak) that on the one side attracts, and on the other side resists, is not, cannot be, *in* the sun, or *in* the earth. Are we to think that the sun is an actor, exerting a certain virtue inherent in his personality, and by this affecting the earth in a particular manner? Power, ability to act, is a latent faculty which, through the medium of the possessor, produces, originates, causes, some change. But a *causer* of change, that is, an actor, without volition, without even consciousness, is a contradiction. The power (the ability to *cause* a change) whereby the sun attracts the earth, can be only in a person, not in a *thing*. The Creator has so willed it, and *his* causative power secures that it shall be done. This is the only interpretation of the law of the earth and the sun; at *this moment*, when the law is seen in operation, not ages ago, and at *every moment* when the phenomenon is presented, The Creator wills it, and His power effects it.*

* It must be borne in mind, that we have here nothing to do with the doctrine of eternal succession or eternal necessity. We argue on the presupposition of Creation and a Creator. These granted, we seek to show what they necessarily involve,

The idea of the Almighty *impressing* a law upon the sun and the earth at their creation, which therefore abides in force, and under which they *of themselves* must for ever continue to act, is a pure invention imposing upon us by sounds, which on examination are found to have no intelligible significance. If the law be regarded as *His* announced will or purpose, neither the sun nor the earth is capable of understanding the announcement, or of retaining the knowledge of it. They cannot receive a command, and cannot obey it. The volition or purpose of the Divine Mind cannot be contained *within them*, be imparted to them. In like manner, power, ability to originate change is incapable of being conveyed to them, of being retained by them; *they* can never become actors, originators, senders forth of influence from themselves. Power, conscious voluntary activity, is *in* a Person only, not in unconscious matter. The Supreme can make use of the earth or the sun to do what he judges fit. *He* can *cause* them to act on one another as he pleases; *He* can determine and secure that they shall invariably act in one way, so that we shall understand that this is his fixed law. But the meaning is, that at every moment when they so act,

and how the phenomena of the universe are to be interpreted in consistency with them.

He is the direct, present, immediate, sole *causer*. The laws of Nature are simply the will of the Almighty, and indicate to us the course which He wills to take with Nature. They have, and can have, no existence except in the mind of God. They are not *in* nature, there is no "*locus in quo*" for them, except in a mind. In like manner the powers and forces of Nature have no existence except in Him. They are attributes of a being, not of a thing. Certain work is done, and we rightly argue, that there must be a worker, but a worker is a person, not a thing.

The whole course of material nature, therefore, in its minutest and in its grandest departments, is nothing else than The Infinite acting, *directly, immediately acting*. There is a substance (be it what it may) on which and through which he acts—and this also was created by him—but at every moment, everywhere, *He* is the direct, the immediately present, the sole Actor. The will, the purpose, and the power that are evinced are *in* him and *in* him only. In this light, Science is emphatically the record of Divine, Physical Providence; it is the discovery and the announcement of that fixed course, according to which The Great Being has chosen to act, in all the spheres of material nature. "A law," says Dr. Whewell, "supposes an agent and a power; for it

is the mode, according to which the agent proceeds, the order according to which the power acts. Without the presence of such an agent, of such a power, conscious of the relations on which the law depends, producing the effects which the law prescribes, the law can have no efficacy, no existence. Hence we infer, that the intelligence by which the law is ordained, the power by which it is put into action, must be present, at all times and in all places, where the effects of the law occur; that thus the knowledge and the agency of the Divine Being pervade every portion of the universe, producing all action and passion, all permanence and change. The laws of matter are the laws which he, in his wisdom, prescribes to his own acts; his universal presence is the necessary condition of any course of events; his universal agency, the only organ of any efficient force." *

But the subject admits of a more profound, if not a more satisfying exposition. In denying the reality of a Physical Providence, the necessity of a continued and direct Divine Working in the material universe, the distinction between the Creator and the Created is lost sight of. "The

* Astronomy and General Physics, p. 361.

Eternal One" is Self-existent, absolutely Independent; his Being is its own ground and out of itself needs and has no ground of existence. We can give no account of it, except that it is, ever was, ever will be, ever must be, cannot but be. The Universe, on the other hand, is absolutely dependent. It began. At the will of the Creator, it began. *He* caused it, produced it by his mere power. The *reason*, the sole reason, of its existence, lies in His will and power. It *became*, it was what it was, because *He* willed it, and for no other reason whatever. The ground, the foundation on which it stood was this only. It had no reason of existence, *in itself.* But having once existed, *can* it then, *must* it then *of itself* continue to exist, unless the Creator expressly will that it shall not? Does a thing once created, that is, a thing the sole cause and ground of whose first being is in God, thereafter become *self*-existent and independent? Having *received* being, is it then *able* to sustain itself, has it *then* a reason, a ground for continuing in being, *in itself?* Does it need only the fact that it exists, to insure that it shall continue, unless some positive exercise of power be put forth to destroy it?

Nothing can be more decisive, more irrefragable, than the answer with which these questions must

be met. The Creator cannot give independence, in the sense here intended, for a single moment, to a single created thing. The reason, the ground for the created, in all the varieties which this term comprehends, the cause of its *first being*, the sole cause, is a distinct act of the Almighty will and power. On the very same principle, the cause, the sole cause of its continuing to be, at any moment afterwards, is a distinct act of the Almighty will and power. Just because it is created and not uncreated, it can never be *self*-existent for an instant. The Supreme cannot communicate the attribute of self-existence; for this would be to create uncreated substance. The reason, the ground of the existence of the universe, of every single atom at every moment, is not in itself but wholly and only in the Creator. It *is* nothing, *has* no meaning, no reality, no being, except in Him. Underneath it and in it, sustaining it, entirely causing it, are the Almighty will, the Almighty power. Let these be withdrawn for a moment, let them only not be, that is, let there be no *present* Divine volition, and that moment it *is* nothing for the sole ground of its being is gone.

So far from God being able to abandon the universe (having once created it) to a course of independent self-development, his direct agency *is*

not less necessary every moment, to the *very being* of the minutest atom, than it was in the act of creation itself. Whether we refer to matter or to mind, there can be self-existence, independence, only in "The Unconditioned." Of mind and matter it is equally true, that the sole ground of its *beginning* to be and of its *continuing* to be is in the Almighty will, the Almighty power directly put forth; throughout the entire sphere of creation, therefore, Divine working is a universal, a constant, a profound reality. Strictly speaking, there is no Worker in Nature but one, that is the Creator. In the flowing river and the restless ocean—in the waving plain and the solitary flower—in the gentle and the stormy wind—in the falling rain and the noiseless dew—in the beams of light and in the diffusion of heat—in all the activities of inorganic substance and of vegetable and of animal matter, it is verily "The Infinite," we behold—"The Infinite" acting. In the spring time of the year, when the earth grows green, and sends up its wondrous life, and fields and woods and hills are clothed with beauty, it is "The Infinite" acting, we behold. When, again, the produce of the earth is cut down, and by-and-by is gathered up, a munificent provision for man and beast,—or when the

snows of winter cover, and its frosts harden, the soil so lately clad with verdure and laden with abundance,—or when we think of these changing seasons of the year, produced by the revolutions of our planet around the sun,—or when we turn to the myriads of planets, stars, suns, and systems that replenish space, and reflect on their mighty and complicated movements, and on the vast harmony that reigns throughout,—in all, it is "The Infinite" acting, we behold. *His* Will and *His* Power are the only forces in Nature. Everywhere there is a present God, acting not at random, but by law, on principle, with fixed design. There is a plan in His working, a distinct and by us discoverable plan; it is based on law, an extended and harmonious system of laws. There is a Providence as certainly as there is a Creator. The Great Being has not only given existence to a Universe, but he makes godlike *pro*vision for all its interests and wants. He *sees forward*, and his far-seeing eye connects the end with the beginning. His agency is a vast, complicated, but harmonious Whole, throughout which we trace not only one Mighty Hand, but one Unerring Mind. There is a glorious Unity in all the multiplicity and variety of mechanical, chemical, and physiological phenomena on our earth. And

our earth is but a fragment of the Mighty Unity of the Material Creation. The real, ceaseless acting of "The Supreme" throughout Creation is as certain as His Being. Physical Providence is all but a fact of science; it is so direct an inference, that it may almost be classed with its established discoveries. How far beyond this, the Divine Working extends,—whether there be a Moral as well as a Physical Providence, and how much is comprehended within the sphere of Moral Providence,—is yet to be ascertained.

CHAPTER III.

THE INFINITE ONE IN THE KINGDOM OF SPIRIT.

PHENOMENA OF MIND AND OF MATTER—DISORDER OF MORAL WORLD—NO PLAN ORIGINATING WITH MEN, BUT *in* MIND OF GOD—HIS INTELLIGENCE NECESSITATES THIS—REIGNING MORAL LAWS—PROGRESSIVE DEVELOPMENT—NOT DIRECT—REALISATION—DESTINY OF MAN—HUMAN AND DIVINE AGENCY—HOW COMBINED.

NECESSARY DISTINCTION.

PHYSICALLY considered, Mind needs equally with Matter the mighty and constant support of the Supreme; for its continued being, as for its first existing, there is demanded *His* immediate will and power, and, except *in* these, *it* has no ground of existence for a moment.

But there is a clear distinction, nevertheless, as it respects even *this* kind of dependence, between Matter and Mind. Matter is a thing, not a person. It has no consciousness, no volition. It is not an actor, cannot contain, cannot put forth power. It is acted upon, is the medium through which agency may be conducted, but it, itself, cannot act. The forces of Nature are *literally* and *only* the Power of The Unseen, exerted through the medium of Nature, the various material modes in which He chooses to exert His Power. But a human mind is a person, a conscious, voluntary being, an actor. *All its* power is derived and dependent, but it *possesses* it nevertheless. Its faculties of thinking, feeling, and willing are *in it*, not in its Maker; they are *its* real attributes, of which, as belonging to it, it is distinctly conscious. And these faculties, besides, are consciously under its control, at its command, so that it can put them

forth or not, according to its pleasure. It, itself, from itself, on its own grounds, can act, can originate, can strictly cause. Its actings and changes are produced by a power *in* it, which it consciously exerts.

In the region of mind, therefore, we are introduced to an essentially different class of facts, from those which are presented to us in the unconscious and involuntary phenomena of material nature. The thoughts, the reasonings, the conclusions, the principles, the motives, the feelings, the purposes, and the actions of human beings are *their own*, belong to them, and are *produced* by them in a sense which has no counterpart in material objects and their changes. There is thus a world within material nature: we call it the spiritual world, and it is distinguished by elements that are altogether new; those, namely, of intelligence, conscience, affection, and volition, which are powers properly belonging to *it*, not to *God*. There is here an originative force, which is, indeed, derived and dependent, but is nevertheless real. It is conferred by the Supreme, and is every moment sustained only by his Almighty Will; but, so long as it is continued, it is the conscious possession of men, and is put forth, controlled, and entirely governed by them. That inner world, encompassed by the outer

material world, is now before us. We look through the outward lives of men, *in* to the hidden formative principles of their lives; we behold men acting upon themselves and towards others, in wisdom or in folly, usefully or injuriously, according or contrary to the law of right; and we distinguish, on the one hand, their excellences and virtues, and on the other hand, their vices. Their deeds and their words reveal both, —vice often insinuating itself among the virtues, and virtue often not altogether wanting, even in their vices.

The spiritual history of our world is full of mystery and difficulty, repellant and yet attractive, as a subject of thought. We behold man in his personal, social, political, and (through all) divine relations. We look on the products of his piety, his genius, his taste, and his industry, the effects resulting from his principles or his passions, from the mingled good and evil influences which he suffers to act upon him. We see these products and effects now on a limited and again on a more extended sphere, as well spread over all the past, as rising up from all the present. The spectacle is in great part only deeply distressing. How shall we connect with it an actual and pervading Divine agency? In material nature, it is impossible to fail in discovering harmony

and order. In the spiritual world, it is impossible to deny all but universal confusion. In the past and in the present, there lies before us a heterogeneous mass, collected, apparently, by no design, and which no assignable principle of analysis can resolve. It is not merely that men are in great part a lawless, vicious, and suffering race of beings, but there is apparently no plan in human affairs, no reigning principle, no fixed course of procedure, indicating the adaptation of means to a distinct and exalted end. We pause, for in such language as this the facts are overstated and falsified.

There is, indeed, no plan in the moral history of the world, which the race of man has formed for itself, and which is faithfully taken up, from age to age. It is most palpable that, at this moment, men of all nations and classes have no common ideas respecting the aim to which their activities should be directed. Not less undeniable is it, that in no single age since the world began, have all men been thus at one in their ideas and aims. If this be true, the notion of a primitive and universal plan, transmitted from age to age and adopted by each in succession, must be the merest fiction. But because there is no such design among human beings, is there therefore no design, anywhere? Are there no reigning laws,

because *men* have not conceived and established them? And while in material nature Divine agency is direct and constant, and universal, has that agency no place amidst all the activities of the spiritual world?

The idea is incompatible even with the attribute of intelligence. The Infinite Life gave being to Minds, is even more intimately related to them than to any other form of created existence. God is the Father of minds. It is inconceivable that the Creator, the Father, should have had no design in bringing them into existence,—that, having given them a being, he should have omitted to give them a destiny, and should have abandoned them, without control, to mere self-development, be the issue what it may to which that self-development shall conduct. While, in the lower region of his dominions, all is manifest and mighty order, and the wisest ends are effected by the best adapted means, in this, the noblest part of his empire, is there nothing but wild confusion, universal contingency and uncertainty, in which, to whatever it may at last conduct, there is no Divine purpose, as there is no Divine interposition? We repeat, that this is utterly incompatible even with the attribute of intelligence. A wise being cannot act without design. The wisest of Beings cannot have acted without design. The

Infinite Intelligence *must* have had an end, and one worthy of Himself, in the creation of human minds, and, if an end, must also have contemplated means no less worthy for accomplishing the end. Whether we be capable of discovering the end and of tracing out the means in their perfect adaptation, is not the question. But there *must* be—we argue it simply on the ground of the intelligence of the Great Being, —there must be a Divine plan; and, if a plan, then also a distinct Divine Agency in the spiritual, as in the material, world.

Amidst confusion, suffering, and crime, as it respects men, there must be method, law, as it respects God. Nor is it to be denied, that, wild as the disorder is which overspreads the moral history of our race, traces are still discernible, however confused and faint, of reigning and righteous law. Into the current speech of men, into the common proverbs of nations, the evidence, not of a floating notion, but of a thorough conviction to this effect—the result of experience—has wrought itself. "Honesty is the best policy," is a special and not elevated application of a grand and universal truth, which men have at length reached. It is this,—"The Good are the Happy." "Wrong-doers are Miserable." "Virtue is Life, Vice is Death." Startling and

harassing anomalies there may be, but, in the common belief of men, the principles which have been named are supreme in human affairs. Amidst the vast disorder men discern certain paramount elements of order and of right. And it is felt, besides, that a nearer, wider, and more enlightened observation would establish a far more extended sovereignty of law, than is apparent to the casual eye.

It cannot be doubted that, in the laws of Moral Providence, we behold the agency, not of man, but of the Supreme Guardian of immutable rectitude and truth. But were these laws discoverable in far greater number and precision than they are, the question would yet remain, to what are their operations directed? what is the ultimate end which they are working out?—in other words, what is the plan of Moral Providence? We cast back our thoughts on the ages of the past, as far as the historic period extends, and ask if, from the beginning onward till now, there are discernible traces of a *continued* path of God? Most certainly, *men* have had no common plan. But is there no plan of God, which His established laws have been furthering, and which He is bringing nearer and nearer to its full development and realisation? Is there evidence of progress from first to last, or is there not? Progress in a direct

line, in the moral history of the world, it is not possible to discover. The course of things seems often to have been circular rather than direct. They advance, reach a maximum point, and then appear to recede. It is quite capable of proof, that a later age, instead of being an advance on its predecessor, has sometimes been a manifest retrogression. A period of dense and continued darkness has sometimes succeeded an age of comparative illumination. But if the path of the world has been described by circular lines, perhaps the circles have been in advance, the one of the other. The line has indeed often receded, but perhaps it has returned again, and not only touched its former maximum, but a new arc from a new centre has been commenced. Perhaps the centres of the successive circles have been in advance of one another; and a line drawn through these centres is a line of progress, not rapid, but not, therefore, the less sure and decided. The progressive elevation of Humanity, on the whole, every intelligent and candid thinker acknowledges with joy. At this day, a larger surface of human society is illuminated, and the light is of a higher kind, penetrates more deeply, and is more thoroughly diffused, than at any previous period in the history of the world. In the development of intellect, of the moral nature,

and of the social relations, in the diffusion through the masses of whatever light in these directions is discovered, in the conversion of ascertained truth into guiding principle, and in its practical application to the purposes of life, in knowledge of the true wants of man and of the means of supplying them, and in vigorous efforts, nobly intended and often wise and well-adapted, for bringing these means to bear, the world presents a condition at this moment incomparably in advance of any ever before attained. All serious thinkers, however widely they differ, are agreed in this,—that *there is* a Great Destiny, towards which the race of man is making its way. Each may impart to that destiny, the peculiar form and hue of his own creed. But it is the settled conviction of all, that there is a luminous point towards which human things are converging, and that a day of light, of moral splendour, of liberty and of exalted blessedness, shall encompass our globe. There is and there must ever have been a settled plan in the moral, as in the material world. But nothing can be more manifest, than that the plan is not human. There *has been* no compact, no concert among men, and there *is* no such thing now, for carrying out this holy design. It is true that men have been the acting parties; so far as has been apparent to the eye,

they have been the only acting parties. But the plan has been Heaven's alone; the great laws of the moral world, also, which have reigned in all its movements have been from above, and the entire machinery, by which whatever success is yet witnessed has been gained and by which perfect ultimate success shall be achieved, is Divine.

The reality of the continued and universal Divine Working in the Spiritual World is all which we now seek to establish. Its mode is quite another question, and one which opens up all those profound and distressing difficulties which hereafter will appeal to us for solution. Men are the visible agents and instruments of moral providence, the only visible agents and instruments of moral providence. But the Infinite Being is the real, though unseen, Actor, and by means of human instrumentality He is carrying out His Mighty Plan. How are Divine and Human Working connected? Where does the one terminate and the other begin? How much, in the movements of the Spiritual World, is to be attributed to God, and how much to man?

This only, with our present means of judging, we are entitled to assert,—there is too much of disorder, and too much of evil, to allow the belief, that Divine Will and Power are *alone* at work in

the activities of mind, as we know they are in the activities of matter. On the other hand, there is too evident a plan in human affairs, and too evident a sovereignty of holy and mighty laws, for us to imagine that Man *alone* is the Worker in this sacred region. To reconcile the conflicting principles and phenomena of the moral world, the existence of evil with Divine working, and a determined plan with voluntary activity in man, is the overwhelming labour, from which it is impossible not to recoil, but which we are impelled to attempt.

PART THIRD.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE INFINITE NATURE HARMONIOUS WITH THE FACTS OF THE UNIVERSE.

IN TWO CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER I. PHYSICAL AND MORAL EVIL IN THE LIGHT OF REASON.

CHAPTER II. PHYSICAL AND MORAL EVIL IN THE BRIGHTER LIGHT OF REVELATION.

STRETCH OF REASON.

PHILOSOPHY and Theology alike teach us, that beyond the utmost stretch of Reason there lies the illimitable, the unknowable. In the Unity of all truth, even that which we know, and know best, must spread itself, in many of its relations, into this unapproachable region, and be there lost to our thought. *Human* powers of comprehension do not define the extent, and do not exhaust the fulness of spiritual truth. The just effect of this persuasion is not to repress investigation, but, in a conviction of the necessary limitation of our faculties, to supply a new element, which, in concert with other principles, shall act as a guiding influence in all our researches, and especially in all our conclusions.

It is impossible, from the very nature of the subject, to *exhibit* the perfect harmony, *on all sides*, of the phenomena of Providence, with the Moral Nature of *the Supreme*. It is of "the Infinite" we presume to judge, his acting, his reasons, his aims. And *must* these, *can* these be all fathomable, measurable, explicable by us? Perhaps Providence on our earth connects itself with Providence in other regions of the Universe; perhaps Divine spiritual

agency extends over a sphere inconceivably vast, embracing the worlds and peoples of immensity; perhaps the plan of Providence throughout is one, our earth forming an inconsiderable part in the Mighty Whole. Looking, as we do, only on a part, which may connect itself, in ten thousand ways, with that which is beyond our vision, and may only there receive its highest interpretation, shall we expect, *in our fragment*, nothing but what is comprehensible, harmonious, luminous. Were there no scene of God's spiritual working but our earth and its successive populations, how complicated, how intricate, how vast, is even this! How little even of this, is the most capacious human mind capable of looking upon! A scheme which embraces the entire duration of the world, the countless successive generations of men, all their interests, intellectual, moral, social, temporal, and immortal, all the relations of all events, and all their influences and all their results; a scheme, reposing in the Infinite Soul, of whose motives, whose grounds, and whose end, that Soul alone is cognisant,—is *this* a thing for man to understand, to interpret? Were it, indeed, on all sides interpretable by us, should we not on this very account be forced to conclude that it could *not* be divine? From contradictions, clear and undeniable

contradictions to immutable principles, were such found, we should be entitled, even compelled to recoil. But, if there be only incomprehensibilities, it is impossible in such a region that *they* should be altogether wanting.

Systems of Theology, so called, have too often and always with most pernicious effect, professed to exhibit *the Plan* of Spiritual Providence (to use their very words) "*as it existed in the Divine Mind.*" A plan of the *intentions* of God, a Whole excogitated by man, descending to the ground of things and embracing the entire range of Divine designs—anything professing to be in this sense a connected Whole, which, whatever difficulties and darknesses it confesses, yet claims to be a systematised, and, in measure, completed body of truth on this subject, we must maintain carries within it its own confutation and condemnation. Parts of the extended circle, the Infinite Unity, we may rationally hope to distinguish. From many sides a light may fall on us which shall reveal to our immovable conviction the moral glory and grandeur of the Supreme, and shall perfectly satisfy us that all which appears to be irreconcilable is irreconcilable, not in itself, but only in consequence of our limited power. But the Infinite Circle must for ever exist to us, only in

broken parts, never in its totality and unity; and amidst all the light which springs from on high to the watchful and earnest soul, there must remain vast darkness, which we can never penetrate, never illuminate, vast chasms across which no pathway for us can be projected. That there *is* a Perfect, a Glorious Whole, we shall believe, but as a Perfect Whole it must for ever transcend the range of our faculties.

The sphere of Spiritual Providence, which alone is open in any degree to the investigation of our Reason, is this earth. We now turn to this sphere with profound awe, with a settled conviction, also, of the necessary limitation of human capacity, but with an earnest and intense desire to comprehend and to vindicate the ways of God to man.

Evil is the all-embracing, all-defying mystery of this world. Whether as physical or as moral, it presents a difficulty, in connection with the Governing Presence of a Wise, a Holy, and a Good Being, which calls imperiously for solution. Wherefore was Evil first allowed an entrance into the world? Wherefore has it been suffered to perpetuate itself and spread its empire over so vast a portion of our earthly relations? Are not the introduction, the perpetuation, and the extension of Evil in any form

irreconcilable with the essential principles of the Divine Character? Do not these facts limit either the Rectitude, or the Goodness, or the Wisdom, or the Power of God?

Physical Evil — suffering — is a manifest imperfection; often we are tempted to think it a direct injustice. The amount of it, perhaps, is exaggerated by persons of peculiar temperament,—indeed, by all in certain states of mind, and there are many important deductions from its amount which in speculating on this subject we often fail to make. It is perfectly certain, that an immense portion of suffering in our world is the direct effect of the folly or the wickedness of the sufferers themselves, and can create no insurmountable difficulty to any reflecting mind. It admits of no question, besides, that there is a vast amount of actual enjoyment under the existing condition of things, and that the evil, such as it is, is attended with important alleviations. Almost every being, primitively, seems to be made and fitted for enjoyment. The organs, the materials, and the means of physical happiness are abundant. Perhaps there are no earthly lives in which, except owing to manifest fault in themselves, the amount of enjoyment does not outweigh the amount of suffering. And then the rich uses of physical evil are to be

taken into account. Character is strengthened and perfected by suffering. It presents new occasions, even new motives, for exercising and invigorating virtuous principles. It draws forth a higher kind of excellence than had otherwise been possible, and, in fact, gives birth to an entire class of virtues, which, without its existence, could not have been known.

But when Philosophers and Divines have expatiated wisely and piously on the advantages of the existing constitution of the world, the *real* difficulty is felt as acutely as ever; and for its solution their efforts, valuable in other respects, are worse than useless; they are almost an outrage to right reason and to right feeling. The fearful inequalities of rank, of condition, and of circumstances among men are before us. How shall they be explained? A susceptible and honest mind turns only with deep distress to the fact, that multitudes toil and hurry themselves to a premature grave only to gain daily bread, and that multitudes more constantly suffer the most cruel privations, and often have not wherewith to appease the cravings of hunger. Slavery is one of the terrible scourges of humanity. Multitudes of our race, without fault of theirs, are doomed to hopeless, merciless suffering, are robbed of their highest rights, their deepest affections are lacerated,

their most sacred relations are denied, and a life of degradation and torture is closed and buried out of sight in a neglected grave. War is but in a few of its aspects less horrible than slavery. The multitudes that perish by the sword constitute only a small item in its enormity. Multitudes yet more numerous, innocent multitudes, are made widows, childless, fatherless. Its consequences to the physical interests of the world, and especially its moral bearings and effects, are not to be estimated. Altogether, as we look abroad on the face of the earth, and think of blighted human lives, broken human hearts, and tears, and groans, and deaths, and all the accumulated woes that weigh down on our race, we ask, in anguish, is this the effect of the government of an Almighty and Merciful Ruler?

Suffering is a real, a terrible enormity. In spite of all that has been urged as to its alleviations and its uses, the common reason of men proclaims aloud that in every view it had been incomparably better if it had never existed. Those, especially, who believe in myriads of beings that have never known suffering, unfallen angels, cannot surely argue that *their* condition is not preferable to that of our world. It would be little less than insanity, to think that a universe *exempt from suffering* would have been

no better, would not have been inconceivably better, than the universe as it now exists.

But physical evil vanishes beside the overwhelming darkness of moral evil. For the solution of the problem of Divine Providence literally nothing is effected so long as this, its grand and earliest difficulty, is unassailed. It devolves on us to encounter this tremendous, parent-mystery of the universe. Perhaps, in any light which we may be able to throw upon the introduction and extension of moral evil, all the difficulties connected with physical evil may find their most satisfactory solution.

Two paths are open to us; the one to investigate the existence of Physical and Moral Evil under the Divine Government of the World, by the aid of Reason; and the other, to conduct the investigation in the brighter light of Revelation.

CHAPTER I.

PHYSICAL AND MORAL EVIL IN THE LIGHT OF REASON.

IN FIVE SECTIONS.

SECTION I. RESPONSIBILITY.

SECTION II. POWER, THE NECESSARY CONDITION OF RESPONSIBILITY.

SECTION III. MORAL EVIL, THE VOLUNTARY ABUSE OF MORAL POWER.

SECTION IV. THE CREATOR INFINITELY OPPOSED TO MORAL EVIL.

SECTION V. PHYSICAL EVIL, THE NECESSARY EFFECT, BUT ALSO THE DIVINE CORRECTIVE, OF MORAL EVIL.

SECTION I.

RESPONSIBILITY.

GROUNDED IN THE FACT OF CONSCIENCE—MORAL INTUITIONS —HIGHER SIGNIFICANCE—DOCTRINE OF THE INFINITE— ETERNAL GUARDIAN OF TRUTH AND RIGHT—IMMORTALITY— ORIGINAL INTUITION—ACCOUNT HEREAFTER—MAN *must* MEET HIS GOD.

DUALISM OF MAN.

HUMAN nature is essentially dualistic. There is a grand and just sense in which man is accountable to himself, and in the degree in which he recognises this inner self-tribunal is he able to appreciate a more dread accountableness.

Is there such a power as Conscience in the human soul; or is Man either wholly or in great part the creature of circumstances? Are there to him virtue and vice; or are both alike independent of him, the result of his physical organisation and of his outward conditions,—the first involving no merit, and the second no crime? These are the questions which divide the modern secularists, materialists, and necessitarians, from the upholders of human liberty and responsibility. There are, in reality, two great problems which lie at the foundation of the theory of morals: first, What is the distinction between right and wrong? second, By what power of our inward nature do we detect this distinction, supposing it to exist? The first regards the nature of Virtue, the second touches the existence of a Moral Sense and of our Moral Sentiments. With the second of these great problems we have at present to do.

As a matter of fact, our minds make the distinction

between right and wrong. Nobody doubts, nobody can doubt it. True or false, whatever it may involve, we *do* certainly make it: *this*, at least, is the distinct testimony of consciousness. When it is suggested that by such a distinction we mean only to convey that one sort of feeling or acting is wise and another foolish, one sort useful and another hurtful, the same witness which testifies to the fact testifies also that this is not its just interpretation. Whatever that be within us which distinguishes right from wrong, the distinction which it makes is not expressed by wisdom and folly, advantage and disadvantage. On the one hand, we are conscious of a kind of approbation which is not awarded to wisdom, and, on the other hand, of a kind of disapprobation which is not awarded to folly. There is a form of excellence, which the words wisdom and utility do not express; we call it moral excellence, virtue: and there is a form of evil which the words folly and injury do not express; we call it moral evil, vice. The question is, by what power of our minds do we institute this class of judgments, and to what region of our spiritual nature does this power belong?

If in this case it were a mere calculation which we conducted, and if the moral distinctions drawn by us were altogether the result of investigation and of

reasoning, a balancing of qualities and quantities, we should have no difficulty in bringing *this* within the ordinary function of the understanding. But the usual processes of the understanding are found not to be applicable here, at least not in multitudes of cases, and the understanding is found not to be, at all events, the *first* judge in this matter. The distinction between right and wrong is not arrived at by mental research, is not reasoned out, and weighed, and balanced by the judgment. In the vast majority of cases, this distinction is not a discovery which we reach, but rather a perception of which we are conscious—an immediate perception. It can be likened to nothing so much, as to the action of the sense-organs. The power by which it is effected may be compared to an inward sense, just as the eye and the ear are outward senses. There is a faculty in the mind, of instantly recognising *the moral* in act or in disposition, the rightness or wrongness of a thing, in the same way as the organ of vision immediately perceives the effect of light and shade, and the organ of hearing immediately perceives the vibrations of the atmosphere. There is a moral nature in man as there is a sensational and an intellectual nature. There is a power whose sphere is *the moral,* and that power is *first of all* distinctively *perceptive;* its pro-

vince is to *apprehend* the moral, to perceive rightness and wrongness, and the perception, speaking generally, is immediate, like that by the sense-organs: it is intuitive, it is universal.

Into the numerous and intricate controversies that have arisen on the question of the originality and the intuitional character of Human Conscience, we dare not enter. We may be permitted, however, to utter the conviction, that the beautiful analysis of psychological facts in this region, by Sir James Mackintosh,* whose ethical speculations are so admirable as to create the deepest regret that they had not been more extended, fails to sustain his theory of a *composite* rather than a *simple* nature of the Moral Sense. The reasonings of Butler, and still more of Hutcheson, not to name later accomplished ethical writers, uphold the conclusion, that Conscience, the power which distinguishes right from wrong, is a separate and original faculty of the Human Soul. But the difficulties which stand in the way of this theory are far from being inconsiderable. The fact, for example, that the most opposite ethical notions apparently, are found in different ages and among

* Dissertation on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy. Edinburgh: 1837.

different tribes, is hard to be reconciled. It would seem, that that which is virtue in one age is vice in another, — that that which is condemned in one country is honoured in another. There can be no common Moral Faculty, it is said, in human nature, when the moral perceptions and judgments of men are thus found to be as opposite and variable as can be conceived. A valid criterion of virtue can never be furnished by that which is so mutable and even so contradictory.

The imperfections and perversions of conscience are freely admitted, although not to the extent which, from love of theory, is often alleged; but the conclusion which is founded upon them is emphatically denied. The human eye, through various causes, may become either strengthened in its power of vision, or weakened, and even permanently impaired, and no longer capable of distinguishing accurately the effect of light and shade. But we do not therefore deny, that to the human race generally this organ is a valid and trustworthy witness of the presence and the qualities of external objects. Memory is a very variable faculty of the mind. It may, on the one hand, be incalculably strengthened, and it may, on the other hand, become exceedingly treacherous and unretentive. But we do not there-

fore deny, that to the human race generally this power recals the past and is a valid witness of its reality. Even the faculty of knowing and judging is susceptible of the greatest deterioration. It may be weakened (as it may also be strengthened), it may be perverted, corrupted, and all but lost. In certain localities, and in certain conditions, men are scarcely, if at all, in this respect, elevated above the irrational tribes. But we do not therefore deny that rationality is an attribute, an original and universal attribute, of human nature.

Conscience is improvable and impairable. On the one hand, it may be instructed and educated, and with increasing cultivation may become increasingly capable and trustworthy as a guide. On the other hand, it may be awfully darkened and corrupted, may be irregular in prompting, or may almost cease to prompt, to good, and to deter from evil. But we cannot therefore deny that it is a universal and original endowment, a precious and imperishable part of our nature, which takes cognizance of a class of qualities which the ordinary function of the understanding does not embrace, and which distinguishes intuitively between the morally good and the morally evil.

Referring to the errors and imperfections of

the conscience, Dr. Chalmers* says, "It is not that Justice, Humanity, and Gratitude are not the canonised virtues of every region, or that falsehood, cruelty, and fraud would not, in their abstract and unassociated nakedness, be viewed as the objects of moral antipathy and rebuke. It is, that in one and the same material action, when looked to in all the lights of which, whether in reality or by the power of imagination, it is susceptible, various, nay, opposite moral characteristics may be blended; and that while one people look to the good only without the evil, another may look to the evil only without the good. And thus the identical acts which, in one nation, are the subjects of a most reverent and religious observance, may in another be regarded with a shuddering sense of abomination and horror. And this, not because of any difference in what may be termed the moral categories of the two people, nor because, if moral principles in their unmixed generality were offered to the contemplation of either, either would call evil good or good evil. When theft was publicly honoured and rewarded in Sparta, it was not because theft in itself was reckoned a good thing, but because patriotism and dexterity,

* Moral and Intell. Constitution of Man, vol. i. pp. 89—91.

and those services by which the interests of patriotism might be supported, were reckoned to be good things. When the natives of Hindostan assemble with delight around the agonies of a human sacrifice, it is not because they hold it good to rejoice in a spectacle of pain, but because they hold it good to rejoice in a spectacle of heroic devotion to the memory of the dead. When parents are exposed or children are destroyed, it is not because it is deemed to be right that there should be the infliction of misery for its own sake, but because it is deemed to be right that the wretchedness of old age should be curtailed, or that the world should be saved from the miseries of an overcrowded species. In a word, in the very worst of these anomalies, some form of good may be detected, which has led to their establishment; and still, some universal and undoubted principle of morality, however perverted or misapplied, can be alleged in vindication of them. A people may be deluded by their ignorance, or misguided by their superstition, or not only hurried into wrong deeds, but even fostered into wrong sentiments, under the influences of that cupidity or revenge which are so perpetually operating in the warfare of savage or demi-savage nations. Yet, in spite of all the topical moralities to which these have

given birth, there is an unquestioned and universal morality notwithstanding. And in every case where the moral sense is unfettered by these associations, and the judgment is uncramped, either by the partialities of interest or by the inveteracy of national customs, which habit and antiquity have rendered sacred, ... Conscience is found to speak the same language; nor, to the remotest ends of the world, is there a country or an island where the same uniform and consistent voice is not heard from her."

There is a sense of right and wrong, an inborn sense of right and wrong, in the human soul. It may be called a power of moral judgment, if we will, but the first acts of this power, its judgments, at least in innumerable instances, are not formed, as other judgments are, by examining and weighing evidence. They are instinctive and intuitive. With greater exactness, they may be called perceptions rather than judgments,—*immediate* perceptions of rightness or wrongness, in action or in sentiment.

The human conscience performs another and a still higher office; with authority, not to be resisted with impunity, it gives forth its commands on the one hand, its prohibitions on the other hand. This is a psychological fact, to be determined by an appeal to consciousness, and which is satisfactorily

and indisputably set at rest by this appeal. The question is not, whether the commands and the prohibitions of our moral nature be in themselves right or wrong, whether they be heeded or unheeded, or to what extent they are heeded, by those to whom they are addressed. But they are given forth. That is certain, and it is enough. There is a power in the human soul which authoritatively pronounces "the ought and the ought not," what Kant distinguishes as "the categorical imperative," in one word, "duty." Conscience may be variously developed, and may be affected by individual, local, and social circumstances; but every human being is aware of a voice within, which is essentially a voice of command. Unlike the other faculties of our nature, *this* does not submit its materials to be dealt with as the understanding may determine It claims within its own sphere a sovereign authority over all the other principles and powers, a supreme and solitary authority. Its mandates are not permitted to be questioned, although without permission they often are questioned, and even daringly transgressed. But conscience *allows*, in no direction, a right of appeal. Its authority needs no confirmation, and admits no reference beyond itself. "This is right,

that is wrong," "you ought," "you ought not," is the stern language of this inward lawgiver.

The verdict of conscience is its own ground: there is nothing deeper, nothing beyond: it asserts itself not only as a reigning, but as an ultimate authority; its utterances are their own evidence and except themselves, they ask, they offer no evidence; there *is* none. "This is right, that is wrong," we perceive it, we feel it, conscience assures us of it. "This is morally binding," conscience commands it, it is the authoritative voice of our nature; we cannot go farther or higher within the limits of our personal sphere.

Responsibility thus far is a distinctly recognised fact in human consciousness. If to none else, man is accountable to himself, and does, in point of fact, *take* account of himself, and by the very constitution of his spiritual nature condemns or approves himself. It is no fiction, no creation of superstition, no arbitrary restraint, no offspring of groundless fear, but one of the universal, distinctive, and deep realities of his moral being, of which he can no more divest himself than he can throw off his entire nature. Even on this earliest ground it is clear, that Man is essentially a responsible being. He is under law, at least to himself, and at least by

himself is the proper object of praise or blame, reward or punishment. There is such a thing as Duty, Obligation, to him, and for this reason, also, there is such a thing as crime, guilt, to him.

But the sense of responsibility is never dissociated, *in fact*, from the idea of a being higher than man himsel, the idea of very God. Conscience is the voice of "the Infinite" IN Man. When we dispassionately analyse our mental states, it is found, on the clear testimony of consciousness, that the secret of the power of conscience lies in the deep conviction that it stands related to a higher authority, out of itself altogether. There is a sense of God in the human soul, an original intuition *that "the Infinite" is*, that over us and over all there is a Great, an Incomprehensible, but a real Power, and Conscience gives a peculiar significance to this intuition. The Infinite becomes to it the centre and dwelling of moral excellence, the source whence issues the Eternal and Immutable Law of Right, the guardian and defender of all that is holy, and just, and true, and the avenger of all that is evil.

It is not merely that the creature *must* be accountable to the Creator. This, indeed, is a first and self-evident principle. No right can be higher or more inalienable, than that which is based in the fact

of Creation. If our very being, with all its powers, be the product of the Almighty Will, nothing can be plainer than that the first, the all-embracing, the unchangeable obligation under which we lie is to Him. So soon, therefore, as it is felt that conscience is the voice of God, *its* authority is then based on the earliest and deepest of all our intuitions—that which lies at the foundation of our entire nature—the intuition of God.

But beyond this still, the utterances of the moral sense do of themselves touch what is everlasting and unchangeable. The will of our Maker, we have seen, *simply as such*, is to us paramount. But we come to learn that that which is the will of our Maker is also in itself eternally right, and is even independent of all other authority, is indeed uncreated, and could not be changed even by the Supreme. It is the Eternal laws of the great empire of Truth and Right and all Moral Good, which are promulgated by the moral faculty. These laws are the same in every part of the Universe, and throughout all ages, the same to all intelligences, the same to created beings, and in the Divine Mind, where they have dwelt and shall dwell for ever. Conscience, therefore, is that sacred power in the mental constitution which sets before us principles that in themselves

know no beginning, no end, no change. But it proclaims, at the same time, that the Most High is the chosen protector of these principles. The laws of right and wrong, and the kingdom to which they belong, are thus not simply suggestions of conscience, conceptions of the mind, however great be the force and sanctity which even this involves: they are profound realities in themselves, and, what is still more, there is a Mighty Guardian over them, who will not suffer them to be outraged with impunity. To do violence to them is to encounter him.

This is the higher meaning of the sense of responsibility; and it is thus that God's vicegerent overawes the hardiest and the most reckless. We have to answer not to it only, that is to ourselves, but to the Almighty. Rectitude, and Purity, and Truth, and Love have their home in the Infinite Nature. They are its Eternal possessions; the Uncreated is the impersonation of these immutable qualities, is identified with them, and must uphold and protect them. The sense of responsibility is none else than the sense of the Infinite, the Divine. Vague, ill-defined, and even atrociously wrong the ideas formed respecting the Divine may be, but the secret conviction of the human soul abides. There is an unseen, a Mighty Being, whose eye is upon the life,

the heart, and who takes account of right and wrong, and it is, and must be, a fearful thing to fall into his hands.

The convictions and fears of men assume another form still, and one yet more definite and extended. The idea of the Unseen Guardian of the great interests of morality, the Defender of good and the Avenger of evil, connects itself with the notion of existence beyond the limits of the present life. These three conceptions, Conscience, "the Infinite," and Immortality, mutually involve one another. That fear of which all are sensible when violence is done to the authority of conscience is unintelligible, unless there be a Being out of ourselves to whom we are answerable; and this again, *in itself*, is hardly less unintelligible, except we suppose the latent notion that the power of this Being is capable of reaching us beyond the present world. Even *in* the present world, there are not wanting instances of retributive judgment sufficient to arouse our fears. But these are few, on the whole, and rare, and they *suggest* far more than they directly *express*. They strike the mind, not as terminating acts, but rather as anticipative and incipient. They are incomplete in themselves, and need something more to bring out their significance. They are rather examples of

what shall be, than conclusive and comprehensive utterances of what is, foretokens of *the kind of* reckoning which, in a few instances, the Almighty takes on earth, but which may be taken hereafter without abatement. The fears of the stricken conscience are not of evil which shall come down upon us here, but of evil which must overtake us hereafter.

The last, the strongest, the only satisfactory evidence of Immortality is to be found in the intuitions of the soul itself. Its nature, indeed, is mysterious. Its faculties are marvellous, its capacities of self-development, and self-elevation, and of exterior production, almost creation, seem illimitable. It is quite reasonable to conceive that we may have even here a prophecy, all but a distinct promise, of the endless destiny for which it is created. It seems an impeachment of the wisdom of the Creator, to think that he should originate such capabilities, exhibit such indications, almost express such predictions, certainly inspire such hopes, in the case of a being, who, after a short and withal meaningless course, was destined to vanish into nonentity. It is possible, by drawing forth all the significant facts in the soul's history, to heighten exceedingly the presumption, which is thus afforded in favor of its

immortality. And it is grateful to know, that an enlightened faith may in this way be confirmed and deepened. But this evidence is only presumptive, however high the presumption may rise; and *the possibility*, in spite of all, is not to be concealed, that it *may be* the will of the Creator, on grounds which we cannot understand, that the earthly course of man should lead but to annihilation.

Our last and best defence against this fear is a voice from within, a clear and deep enunciation of our own nature. *The soul carries in itself a sense of its immortal destiny.* This is found not to be peculiar to any age, or to any form of cultivation. It is not national, not educational, not even Christian, but strictly universal. So far as such a point can be investigated, it is found to be strictly universal, and even where it has been discredited, it has first been suppressed. Men must have first *unlearnt* it, before they argue against its validity. It is not a longing only, after immortality—not of hope, only, but much more; it is a distinct intimation from within. In certain conditions of our nature, the intimation may be feeble, even inaudible; it may be neglected, even resisted; but never, let humanity be sunk ever so low, is it so entirely suppressed that it cannot be made audible. He who fashioned the soul has so

constituted it, that universally it is *predisposed* to form the idea of its own immortal existence. *He* must have implanted this predisposition, and must have furnished in the original structure the materials out of which this idea was to be formed. The intuitions of the soul are the most indubitable of all verities. If the Creator be wise, if he can have no intention to deceive, if he be infinitely true and infinitely kind, these intuitions may be relied upon as His very voice, and in the most intelligible and direct form, in which he can speak to us. The Maker has with his own signet, stamped immortality on his own workmanship—the soul of man. He has destined it, and made it to know that he has destined it, to live for ever.

Conscience points forward to a life to come. Accountableness does not cease when the earthly life has terminated, it must extend over the whole being of the soul, here and hereafter. The wildest notions of the life to come may float before the mind; but this at least is felt to be certain,—we shall not be out of the reach of our Maker, when the grave hides all that was visible of our personality from the eye of the world. We may be even more near to him, more mysteriously under his eye and in his hand. The account betwixt Him and us, unsettled on

earth, will still be open. We are under a law which we have violated, ourselves being judges, and the Almighty is the guardian of that law. All the fitnesses of things would be contravened, and our essential constitution would be stultified, if our doings and our character were for ever undetermined, unjudged.

The doctrine of responsibility has its ground in the fact of conscience, it is further unfolded in the sense of The Infinite, and it at last finds its highest significance in the intuition of immortality. Man knows and feels that he is accountable to a Supreme Authority for what he is and for what he does. The sense of duty, of moral obligation, is within him, and he cannot divest himself of it. He *must* answer to his Maker: it is right, it is fitting, it is inevitable, it belongs to his being, that *he should* be called to answer to the Impartial Judge of right and wrong, the Mighty Guardian of the eternal and immutable laws of the Moral Universe.

SECTION II.

POWER THE NECESSARY CONDITION OF RESPONSIBILITY.

POWER, FREEDOM, HARMONY OF "UNCREATED"—CERTAINTY AND CONSTANCY NOT NECESSITY, BUT LIBERTY—MAN, HIS STRUCTURE: I. CONSCIOUS POWER OF CHOICE—PHYSIOLOGICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL, THEOLOGICAL DIFFICULTIES—MATERIAL AND MORAL CAUSATION—MAN'S ABSOLUTE DEPENDENCE—WILL, SECONDARY YET REAL INDEPENDENCE—CAUSE OF CHOICE NOT WITHOUT BUT WITHIN—"AUTONOMY" OF WILL—KANT—COLERIDGE—DR. REID—SIR W. HAMILTON—INCONCEIVABLENESS OF MORAL LIBERTY—COUSINS—WILL, ITS OWN LAW—SELF-DETERMINING POWER *of Will*, MISNOMER.—"LAST DICTATE OF UNDERSTANDING"—"GREATEST APPARENT GOOD"—NO LAW, OUT OF ITSELF, TO WILL—FATALISM. II. ABILITY TO EXERCISE POWER OF CHOICE—MANIAC—LOWER ANIMALS—VOLUNTARY LOSS OF MORAL POWER, CRIME—FORCE OF HABIT SENSUALISM—IRRESPONSIBLE INABILITY—MORAL MALFORMATION—RIGHTEOUS CONDITION AND CRITERION.

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PERFECTION OF BEING.

"THE Uncreated" MUST BE Absolute Perfection, *The* Perfection of *Being* — Physical, Intellectual, Moral — *The* Perfection of *Moral* Being in all its aspects. His nature, righteous, benevolent, truthful, pure, is an infinite harmony. Reason, Conscience, Emotion, and Volition, in Him, are eternally at one, not in consequence of foreign necessity, but owing to Internal immovable choice. Imagine — if it be lawful, on so sacred a subject, to hazard such a thing — but only for the sake of illuminating a holy and settled truth — imagine a momentary disturbance of the Uncreated Mind, emotion, affection, inclination, discordant with Eternal Reason or Eternal Conscience; that moment would record a loss of Power, of Freedom, in The Supreme. A nature disorganised, at variance with itself, is enfeebled in the very fact. It is enslaved for the time, unconcentrated, paralysed by an evil within, instead of being harmoniously bestowed on free, unimpaired, and unopposed self-development. Only he, who is at one with himself, is strong, compact, prepared for decisive and truthful manifestation.

Harmony is Strength. The Harmony of the Divine Nature is eternally self-derived and self-

sustained; there is no cause of it, except God's invincible moral power, his absolute freedom, the spontaneous force of his own Being. The moral and the intellectual in Him give forth their presentations; these are infinitely pleasing to Him, and all the actings of the Divine Soul are in infinite concord with them; but if the *cause* of this be demanded, there is no cause except Internal choice. Clearly, this issue *is* what it *ought* to be, is altogether right, and alone right; but that which is right and which *ought* to be, The Most High chooses *shall* be. It is the Perfection of his Being that he does so, and that he *can*, because he *will* do nothing else.

Physical possibility of another course than that which he actually determines upon, mere power for this purpose, there is to the Supreme, most manifestly; but moral power, free choice in Him, is the governor and the guide of physical power. Inert, dormant potentiality in itself is nothing, does nothing; it must be put into action by will. The Great Being chooses, always chooses, to exert his Almightiness in one direction and no other. If he *does not*, if he *never* does, if, as we speak, he never *can* act otherwise, it is simply and only because he *will* not, it is owing not to a defect but to a perfection;

namely, that what He determines *shall* be is always what *ought* to be, and nothing else: He commands, instead of being commanded, by his own illimitable resources. It is not because he is constrained, but because he cannot be constrained, and ever determines only as he *pleases* to determine.

To say, therefore, that the Supreme *cannot but* choose what is wise, and right, and good, is simply to express his Infinite Moral Power and Freedom; it is to say, that his choice cannot be forced into discordance with Conscience and Reason. Only by force, could *He* act inconsistently with these powers of his Being. A deviation from the invariable, immutable course of his procedure would be a proof, not of freedom, but of compulsion. Such a deviation, therefore, is impossible, not because he is necessitated, but because he *cannot be* necessitated. Freely, spontaneously, unconstrained from without and from within, he chooses only what is wise and right and good. To imagine that the Supreme *Will* is nevertheless necessitated, is mere vexatious imbecility: necessity and self-determined choice are the most perfect opposites: we can put into words no higher announcement of perfect liberty, than when we say that a being absolutely governs his own choice.

Constancy and certainty of action are thus no proof of necessity in the sense of compulsion, but *may be*, and, in the case of the Divine Being, *are*, the result of the most perfect moral liberty. The *cause* of the constancy and certainty, the governing power which secures them, *may be*, and, in the case of the Divine Being, *is*, choice, free choice.

The structure of man, essentially considered, the original constitution of his soul and the design and meaning of that constitution are not to be mistaken. As a responsible, rational, moral being, he is *formed* to choose and love the true and the right; his *Divine destiny* is to yield to moral obligation and to the force of truth. Reason and Conscience are his ordained guides, and he knows and feels that they are so; *their* utterances are, *in themselves*, above everything else, they are so to the Supreme, they are so eternally and necessarily, and never *can* be otherwise; and that *he* is thus constituted, is only to say that the Creator formed him in harmony with the eternal order of the Moral Universe. A created Mind whose will acts in obedience to Conscience and Reason rises to the true ideal of a perfect moral being —a likeness of The Uncreated. This is the highest freedom, it is power, it is glory. Will, *in* man—as, indeed, even in The Creator—will, in any rational

being, is truly free and truly strong, when it is *thus* determined. The spiritual mechanism is then harmonious and the moving power is faithful to the design of the structure. The true and the right *ought* ever to be chosen; they deserve to be preferred above everything else; and when they are preferred, *in fact*, the being then, and only then, realises *the Divine Idea*, and reveals entire, constitutional self-command.

The Attribute of Will, of all the endowments of his rational and moral nature, is that which constitutes Man an Actor, a responsible Being, and not an irresponsible thing. His Conscience and his Reason are activities, but they are so in themselves, and in a great degree independently of him, and they put forth, and can put forth, no activity out of themselves. They contain and present truth, but in this their entire office is exhausted. In thinking and reasoning on any subject, in perceiving and judging of right and wrong, the soul is active, but the activity—if the paradox be not too gross—is passive; and, were there no other power, it would terminate where it began, and could lead to nothing, almost mean nothing. There *is* another power: that which constitutes man properly an agent, and not a mere instrument, is his Faculty of Will.

A double question arises here, which in both of its parts touches profoundly the doctrine of responsibility. First, is man possessed of liberty of choice? Secondly, is he so endowed, as to be able rightly and wisely to use this liberty? Moral Power is, first of all, simply synonymous with freedom of choice, but, in its truer and higher meaning, it includes ability to exercise this freedom, so as to secure the ends of the spiritual organisation.

I. Is man, by the structure of his soul, free to choose for himself? That is the first point. Certainly, there are states of mind of which he is conscious, which, in common language, we distinguish as preferences, determinations, choices. Does *he* form them? Is he endowed with a proper faculty for this end? Or are they only things *happening* within him, he knows not how? It is a question, a most vexed question, whether these mental states be *merely* the result of circumstances, or merely the *necessary* effect of the physical or the spiritual structure, or wholly the acts of a power of free choice? We venture to think that this great and grave problem resolves itself into a matter of simple fact. It belongs to the sphere of consciousness, it relates to a mental phenomenon, and therefore its reality

or non-reality, its nature and its ground, can be ascertained only by an appeal to consciousness. The response of universal human consciousness is the first, indeed the only thing to be ascertained.

Is there within human beings a conscious power to choose for themselves, and, as a matter of fact, are they constantly, invariably, and without a single instance to the contrary, exercising this *inward* faculty, however their *outward* acting may be fettered? The answer is as distinct as it is possible to conceive, and it is universal; men are not only not conscious of constraint of any kind, or of certain mere phenomena, called choices, rising up in them, wholly or partially independently of their acting, but they are perfectly and distinctly conscious of entire, inward freedom, and of absolute inward power.

A choice—confining the word strictly to the inward phenomenon, totally irrespective of any purpose reaching outwards, and therefore, affected by outward relations—is a man's own act, with which no being in the universe can interfere. It is wholly an internal act, which none besides himself and the God that made his mind can *even know*. He chooses, that is, *he himself* inwardly prefers—knows, feels, that he prefers, one thing to another;

for himself, so far as it rests with him, he inwardly selects one out of two or more paths. *He does* this: it is not a fact occurring in his mind of which he knows not the reason—*He does* it, whatever others wish, deem best, prefer, he for himself is perfectly conscious that, in his secret mind, he freely, deliberately, chooses *this*. The grounds of the choice are not the question. He may or he may not be able readily to explain them. They may be strong and valid, or futile and vicious. But *he* is conscious of being free and able to choose, and *he* exercises this freedom, this power, and chooses; for himself, independently of every other being, he knows and feels, not that a preference *somehow* is formed in his mind, but that *he forms* a preference, and that this is wholly and only his own, independent, self-originated deed. He may be compelled to *act*, contrary to his choice, but it abides the same, notwithstanding. The arbitrary power of others, or the force of circumstances, can and does affect his *acting*. But no power out of himself can form for him or impose upon him, a real secret preference: *that* is only and wholly his own act. No imaginable species of force or fraud can in any way touch it; if it could, and if there were conscious force, then there could be no choice; the one would be destructive of the

other. If a man be constrained from within or from without, this means, if it mean anything, that he does that which he feels is not his free wish. If he inwardly chooses, it means, if it mean anyihing, that on the one hand he is in no way conscious of the slightest constraint, and on the other hand, that he is conscious, not of passively accepting something which is presented to him, but of *doing* something, of freely, independently, acting. As for *unconscious* constraint, or mere passivity, mistaken for voluntary activity, it is a puerile fiction. The only evidence we can have of any material phenomenon, any inward fact, is that of consciousness; beyond what we are conscious of, as passing in our minds, there is, there can be to us, no reality. To assert the reality of any mental condition, of which we are not conscious, is perfectly gratuitous; and, in the present instance, the evidence of consciousness is not negative but positive. In preferring, a man is not only not conscious of constraint, but he is conscious that there is no constraint, conscious, also, not of passivity but of activity, independent, self-determined activity, and that all that is done is wholly *his* doing.

Physiologists discourse to us very interestingly and instructively, of the nervous system, of the different kinds of nervous matter, and of the different forms

of nervous structure, and of the consequent different nervous susceptibility in different individuals. They then assure us, very honestly, without doubt, that what we call free-will is a mere delusion, which we practise on ourselves, and that the peculiar character and disposition of each individual, which entirely determine his inward preferences, his volitions, are the necessary result of his material organization, acted upon by the outward circumstances in which he is placed.

Philosophers and Divines also torture us with their reasonings; suggesting apparently irreconcilable contradictions between facts and principles, putting forth the consequences on the one side and the other, that inevitably follow from certain admissions, and maintaining that, though there be *no foreign physical constraint*, there is a universal *necessariness* in the decisions of the will. Every choice, it is alleged, is necessary, in the sense that it could not have been other than it is. The course of the human will is as determinate as the course of the stars, and the law which governs it is as universal as that of gravitation. In material changes all proceeds according to settled principles, which meet every case and which cannot be contravened; and, in a moral sequence, it is maintained, there must be the same ne-

cessary connection between cause and effect. The determinations of the will, though consciously uncompelled,* are inevitable according to the laws of moral causation, and cannot, in a single instance, be other than they are. It amounts to this—that, at the moment when the human agent forms an inward preference, there is one thing, and *only one thing*, possible to him; that, instead of freely making a choice, as we call it, he has no real power, and can only yield to an unconscious but resistless necessity; and that what is called his choice, instead of originating in a power within him, the free exercise of which belongs to him, is the mere and necessary effect of the nature of things,—foreign to his conscious sphere altogether,—which, through his medium, only exhibits and announces itself. Every sane man, in the act of willing, gives an emphatic contradiction to these principles. In that act, he knows and feels that either of two things (at the least *two*) is possible to him. If there be consciously only one possibility before him, *he*, with all the world, will protest that he can then have no choice. The word implies a decision between at least two possibilities. The absurdity is not to be measured, of saying that, though

* The verbal contradiction is not ours, but attaches to the theory we are combating.

apparently—and *consciously* to him—there be more than one, yet in reality and in the nature of things there is only one thing, possible to him. His entire consciousness contradicts the assertion, and that consciousness is a direct falsehood, if this be true. *At least* two things are before him, and the cause of his taking the one and not the other, the sole cause he finds in himself; it is the perfectly free act of his soul. Amidst Motive Influences of a thousand kinds, the issue, whatever may be alleged from any quarter, he is perfectly assured, by the highest authority, was owing entirely to a voluntary exercise of his power of choice. So far from being necessary, inevitable, he is distinctly conscious that he *might have* made, and was perfectly free to make, another choice, and that the sole reason why he *did not*, was in himself —*he* determined on this.

In spite of Physiologists, Philosophers, and Divines, we take refuge in the indestructible testimony of consciousness. Whatever be false, *this* must be true, and lies at the foundation of all truth; there is no truth in the Universe *for man*, if this be false; we can trust to nothing evermore, if this deceive us. The absolute veracity of consciousness is a first principle of all Knowledge, all true Science, all sound Philosophy. Standing on this immove-

able basis, unable perhaps to go beyond it, or to clear any of the difficulties which on so many sides are started, and in such appalling array, we are perfectly secure. The clear, loud voice of consciousness to every human being is, that, as he is constituted by God, he is entirely free to choose for himself, and is endowed with the appropriate faculty for this purpose.

Moral causation, when viewed in the light of consciousness, as a question of simple fact, and of psychological induction, is altogether different from the same subject, when reasoned out, on the ground of what we must be permitted to call a vicious Physics, or Metaphysics. The material world is only and wholly a succession of antecedents and consequents, or, as we speak, of causes and effects; there is no such thing as departure from the great laws of the universe, not an atom, nor the minutest change can be out of the sphere of their control; they are all-comprehensive, invariable, and necessary. External phenomena, always and everywhere, are simply the effect of the operation of these laws; there is nothing to overcome, nothing even to question or interfere with their operation. But when we pass from the material to the moral world, at the very threshold we meet with a kind of power, to which no analogy

can be found in the region we have left behind. Man is constituted a voluntary being; he is endowed with a faculty of choosing: instead of taking his place in a succession of antecedents and consequents, he is a free-worker, and consciously governs his inward self, independently of foreign antecedents and consequents. His mind, instead of being a mere recipient of impulses and their obedient servant, he feels, is placed high above them, invested with a regal power over them, to choose or to refuse any or all of them, and is thus strictly a causer, a conscious, voluntary *beginner* of change, from itself, and by a faculty belonging to itself, and under its control, though derived from its Maker. In the fact of voluntariness, the fact of the power of choosing, the Almighty has conferred on man a secondary, but nevertheless a real *independence*.

In his *being*, man is independent, not for a single instant. In relation to no power with which that being is gifted, can he ever be independent. His being with all its powers is the creation of the Most High, and never can have any ground of existence, except in the Most High, but there is one part of his nature which, *when acting*, by the constitution the Creator has given it, has no purpose and no meaning, except in a secondary, yet real independ-

ence. As a voluntary being, man is necesarily, in the last instance, governed by himself. At any moment, the Almighty might withdraw as he implanted this power of self-government. But the Faculty of Will continuing, the Almighty could not determine, necessitate its action in any given direction, just because by its very definition, by its essential nature, its acts must be perfectly independent, else *it* would cease to be. That man *is* free to choose, his consciousness for ever assures him, and this renders the necessitation of his choice, by any foreign cause, an impossibility, a contradiction.

In all this, it is not involved, that The Infinite One has withdrawn from Humanity, and denied to himself the power of acting upon it, as he deems right. On the contrary, it is a truth altogether consonant to reason, that *He* is acting, constantly, mightily, mercifully acting upon the soul. Those gentle, illuminating, and purifying inspirations that flow out so richly from Nature in its countless forms are *His*, descend from *Him*, and draw, as they rise again, to *Him*. By the many voices of his Moral Providence, also, he makes his presence and his power felt, and, most of all, *his Agency* is put forth in the direct presentation of moral truth and in the

direct influences of his own mighty Spirit. But amidst influences for good on the one hand, and influences for evil on the other hand, it belongs to man, independently, freely, to choose. He is endowed with the faculty of Will, and cannot, without the destruction of his nature as the Almighty has constituted it, be necessitated or made merely passive by any foreign power. Free, independent choice stands at the diametrically opposite extreme from necessitation and from mere passivity. The proximate cause of what a free being really chooses, what he in his heart prefers, must be found in himself alone, not in the constraint of circumstances, not in the necessity of the nature of things, nor in necessity of any kind—though these may and do affect his actual, outward course—but in his Will, in a purely voluntary act of his own.

There are within him moral perceptions and convictions, reasonings and judgments; emotions of various kinds, fears, hopes, affections; desires connected with his interests, his reputation, his standing, arising not only from his strictly personal sphere, but from his relation to others in social and civil life; and he has besides appetites and passions connected with his animal nature. But amidst these manifold and various influences, he is

in his mind perfectly free to determine for himself, and, as a matter of fact, he voluntarily *does* and *must* determine for himself. If it could be shown, that what he inwardly prefers at any moment was really not owing *to a free act of his*, but was inevitably the result of the previous circumstances, of an influence either contained in them, or arising from their collocation or the mode of their presentation, this would be in effect to assert that he was no longer endowed with a faculty of Will. The cause of *human choice* (then a misnomer) would be, not *in* man, but in the nature, the arrangement, and the accidents of things foreign to the sphere of his consciousness. When it is said that every moral, like every physical effect, must have a cause, a sufficient cause, it is forgotten that *will in man* is itself, or rather man willing, exercising the faculty of will, is himself, a cause. The power, the liberty of choosing, or rather man exercising this power, this liberty, is an independent cause, apart from everything else. He may be acted upon by a thousand influences but he does not *necessarily* yield to any of them, else freedom, spontaneity, voluntariness are gone. He is thus far a productive, creative power; an actor, not a mere instrument, acting as it is acted upon. In physical sequences we have only the

things themselves to consider; in moral sequences, there is present a causative force in addition to the things themselves, and wholly apart from them.

"The autonomy of the will"—an expressive mode of indicating the doctrine we have sought to establish—will suggest, to those who are conversant with ethical speculation, the honoured name of Kant. However offensive may be that mode of thought, characteristic of him, which deals with humanity as if it were the highest thing in the universe, and which seems to ignore its absolute and perpetual dependence, we cannot forget that moral liberty, as it has since been expounded by almost all the distinguished thinkers of Europe, *he* was among the first to argue out by the severest logic and to establish on the strong ground of reason and Conscience. In his "Metaphysik der Sitten," to some extent also in his "Religion innerhalb der Gränzen der blossen Vernunft," and especially in his "Kritik der reinen practischen Vernunft," the autonomy (self-law)—the self-governing power—of the will is proved by arguments which defy assault. "Pure Reason" (we should say Conscience) "is essentially practical, and gives (to man) a universal law, which we style the law of morals." "The self-governing power of the will is the sole basis of all moral laws, and of the

duties rising out of them. An arbitrary or any other governing power could not only not establish moral obligation, but would be subversive of the principle of obligation and of the moral nature of the will."*

The views of Coleridge on this profound subject will be traced by many to his German master—perhaps justly. But they are *his* also, distinctly and deliberately nevertheless, strongly marked with the impress of his peculiar individuality, and connected besides with religious theories, to which Kant certainly never would have subscribed. The sage of Königsberg was never charged with believing in original and imputed sin. Coleridge devoutly and humbly bowed to both, but along with them he maintained the "Autonomy of the Will." Referring to those who hold certain extreme views, which he

* "Reine Vernunft ist für sich allein practisch und giebt (dem Menschen) ein allgemeines Gesetz welches wir das Sittengesetz nennen . . . . . Die Autonomie des Willens ist das alleinige Princip aller moralischen Gesetze und der ihnen gemässen Pflichten: alle Heteronomie der Willkühr gründet dagegen nicht allein gar keine Verbindlichkeit, sondern ist vielmehr dem Princip derselben und der Sittlichkeit des Willens entegegen."—Kritik der prak^a Ver^t Riga^a 1788. See also Grundlegung zur Metaphysik der Sitten, pp. 56, 58. Riga, 1785. Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Rechtslehre, 1797. . . . . Der Tugendlehre. Königsb. 1797.

has before described, he says, "they exaggerate the diseased weakness of the will into an absolute privation of all freedom, thereby making moral responsibility, not a mystery above comprehension, but a direct contradiction, of which we do distinctly comprehend the absurdity." . . . . "I maintain, that a will conceived separately from intelligence is a nonentity, and a mere phantasm of abstraction, and that a will the state of which does in no sense originate in its own act, is an absolute contradiction. It might be an instinct, an impulse, a plastic power, and, if accompanied with consciousness, a desire, but a will it could not be." "This is the Essential Attribute of a will, and contained in the very idea, that whatever determines the will acquires the power from a previous determination of the will itself. The will is ultimately self-determined, or it is no longer a will under the law of perfect freedom, but a nature under the mechanism of cause and effect." * But the German and the *modern English* (the *school of Coleridge* deserves to be *so called*, it has already acquired a *national* extension and authority) and the older Scottish philosophies are at one on this subject. With great veneration we turn to Dr. Reid, the father not only of the modern Scottish, but of all

* Aids to Reflection, vol. i. p. 103.; p. 104.; p. 219.

that is soundest in modern European philosophy. That grave, great man, almost disowned in his own country, has, through the labours of Sir William Hamilton (himself pronounced by Cousin to be the first philosopher of the age), been elevated, after a century of comparative neglect, to the honour with which he had first been crowned by foreign nations. Reid's essay on the Liberty of Moral Agents is not the least remarkable in his book.* It is amazing with what immediate intuitional sagacity he takes hold of the profound and most vital points of the discussion. Whether in expounding and proving his own theory, or in dealing with antagonists, one is struck with his surpassing simplicity, skill, acuteness, native masculine force, and thorough mastery of principles and their applications. With quiet, dignified, philosophic precision, he defines the liberty of a moral agent to be "his power over the determinations of his own will." Throughout, the argument is convincing, we believe unanswerable, by which he proves that this power belongs to man. It must not be concealed, however, that the illustrious editor of Reid does not consent to the conclusiveness of *the argument* for the freedom of the will,

*Essay 4th, Part 3. Essays on Intellectual and Active Powers. London, 1822.

though he entirely bows to the certainty of *the fact*. With great deference we presume to suggest that Sir William Hamilton betrays in this instance the influence of that peculiar theory* of causation, which resolves it into "the doctrine of the conditioned," "the impossibility of our conceiving an absolute commencement." "Is the person," he asks, "an original, undetermined cause of the determination of his will? . . . . If he be, in the first place it is impossible to *conceive* the possibility of this, and in the second, if the fact, though inconceivable, be allowed, it is impossible to see how a cause, undetermined by any motive, can be a rational, moral, and accountable cause. . . . . We cannot compass in thought an undetermined cause, an absolute commencement. . . . . The doctrine of moral liberty cannot be made conceivable, for we can only conceive the determined and the relative." †

Again, Reid had maintained that it is "weak reasoning, in proof of necessity, to say such a motive prevailed, therefore it is the strongest, since the defenders of liberty maintain that the determination was made by the man and not by the motive." On

* Discussions in Philosophy, &c.

† Hamilton's Reid, note, p. 602. Edinburgh, 1849.

this Sir William asks, "But was the man determined by no motive to this determination? Was his specific volition to this or to that without a cause? On the supposition that the sum of influences (motives, dispositions, tendencies), to volition A. is equal to 12, and the sum of influences to counter-volition B. equal to 8, can we conceive that the determination of volition A. should not be necessary? We can only conceive the volition B. to be determined by supposing that the man creates (calls from non-existence into existence) a certain supplement of influences. But this creation, as actual, or in itself, is inconceivable; and even to conceive of this inconceivable act, we must suppose some cause by which the man is determined to exert it." *

1. It is undeniably so; we *must*, and we *do* suppose some cause, and we believe that *that* cause, a perfectly sufficient one, is found *in* the man himself, as endowed with a volitional faculty. The power which belongs to him, or rather he himself wielding this power, is strictly a causer, a primitive causer, *the* ultimate causer and creator of that which before had no existence—namely, a choice; but not a creator amidst nonentity. Preexisting materials are before him, A.B.C.D., &c. (motive influences), but through

* Hamilton's Reid, note, p. 611.

the medium of one or other, or all, of these *he* causes to exist what before was absolutely non-existent—that is, a choice. His self-power does this, not the superior intrinsic force of A, B, C, or D, but *he*, *in willing*, causes this new existence. His faculty, his liberty of choosing, means this or it means nothing.

2. When it is said that if he acts without a motive, without the best motive, he cannot be a rational, a moral, an accountable cause, it is forgotten that this is the very essence of moral evil—that a being acts an *irrational*, an *immoral* part, and is, for the time, *not* a rational, a moral cause. All the while, however, since it is *he* that acts (since *he*, in the exercise of his power, his freedom of choice, is the *true* and *sole* actor in the matter), he is just, therefore, in the highest sense accountable. A perfect moral being, one faithful to his constitution, for ever chooses what is strongest in reason and conscience, in other words, exercises his volitional power legitimately. But there is nothing but himself, ultimately, nothing but his own free will, to hinder him from making another choice. Were it not possible for a rational, a moral being to act an irrational, an immoral part, and at the same time to retain his accountability, there could never

be such a thing as moral evil in the universe. It is a matter of fact every day with rational, moral, accountable beings on earth, that while motive-influence A is = to 12, and motive-influence B is = to 8, and they know that they are so, they yet choose B and refuse A. Man endowed with the power of choosing is *in himself* a true causer, the only true, the ultimate causer of choice.

3. When it is said "we cannot compass in thought an indetermined cause, an absolute commencement, it is admitted unreservedly; but we may be able to see and to show, nevertheless, that *the thing*, though inconceivable, must be a reality. Nor ought we to forget that precisely the same difficulty, only in a far higher degree, attaches to the notion of the Supreme First Cause, though we do not therefore doubt *His Reality*. Sir Wm. Hamilton teaches, with a resistless force which few except himself could command, that the inconceivableness of any fact of consciousness is no argument against its reality. "It will argue nothing against the trustworthiness of consciousness," says he, "that all or any of its deliverances are inexplicable—are incomprehensible; that is, that we are unable to conceive through a higher notion how that is possible which the deliverance avouches actually to be. To make the comprehensi-

bility of a datum of consciousness the criterion of its truth, would be indeed the climax of absurdity; for the primary data of consciousness, as themselves the conditions under which all else is comprehended, are necessarily themselves incomprehensible. We know and can know only that they are, not how they can be."* Sir Wm., in fact is no less thoroughly convinced of the reality of moral liberty than Dr. Reid, though he denies that the thing can be conceived, or that it can be logically established. "It will be observed," says he, "that I do not consider the inability to the *notion* any disproof of the *fact* of Free-Will."† All that he advances amounts substantially to this—"there are among the phenomena of mind many facts which we *must* admit as actual, but of whose possibility we are wholly unable to form any notion."‡ "But though inconceivable, this fact (of moral liberty) is not therefore false; for there are many contradictories (and of contradictories one *must* and *one only can* be true) of which we are equally unable to conceive the possibility of either. The philosophy, therefore, which I profess, ... establishes Liberty practically as a fact, by showing that it is either

* Hamilton's Reid, p. 745.
† Ib. p. 611. ‡ Ib. note, p. 602.

itself an immediate *datum*, or is *involved* in an immediate datum of consciousness."*

If anything were wanting, to satisfy us that on this great subject the most vigorous thinkers, the most accomplished philosophers, of the day, the men who are most competent to pronounce a judgment, and who have devoted themselves most laboriously to the study of the points at issue, are entirely agreed, the want is applied by the unqualified language of Cousin. The inconsistency (apparent or real) between his doctrine of the Will and another of the distinctive articles of his philosophy, "the Impersonality of Reason," it falls not to us either to reconcile or to expose. For our purpose, it will be enough to quote a few sentences from his admirable critique on Locke's "Essay on the Human Understanding." "Liberty," he says, "belongs to those acts which we perform with the consciousness of *doing* them, and of *being able not to do* them." Again: "Analysis discovers in this single element (of willing) two terms—namely, a special act of willing, and the power of willing, which is within us, and to which we refer the special act. That act is an effect in relation to the power of willing, which

* Hamilton's Reid, note, p. 509.

is its cause; and this cause, in order to produce its effect, has need of no other theatre, and no other instrument than itself. . . . . At the moment it exerts itself on any special act we are conscious that it might exert itself in a special act totally contrary without any obstacle, without being thereby exhausted; so that, after having changed its acts a hundred times, the faculty remains integrally the same, inexhaustible and identical, amidst the perpetual variety of its applications, being always able to do what it does not do, and able not to do what it does. Here, then, in all its plenitude, is the characteristic of liberty." *

* La liberté . . . . . tombe sur les actes que nous faisons avec la conscience, et de les faire et de pouvoir ne pas les faire. L'analyse découvre dans ce seul élément deux termes encore, savoir, un acte special de vouloir, et la puissance de vouloir en nous à laquelle nous le rapportons. Cet acte est un effet par rapport à la puissance de vouloir qui en est la cause; et cette cause, pour produire son effet, n'a pas besoin d'autre théâtre, ni d'autre instrument qu'elle-même . . . . . au moment même où elle s'exerce par tel acte spécial, nous avons la conscience qu'elle pourrait s'exercer par un acte spécial, toute contraire sans nul obstacle et sans que pour cela elle fût épuisée; de manière, qu'après avoir changé dix fois, cent fois d'actes, la faculté restât intégralement la même, inépuisable et identique à elle-même, dans la perpétuelle variété de ces applications, pouvant toujours faire ce qu'elle ne fait pas et ne pas faire ce qu'elle fait. Là donc est dans toute sa plénitude le caractère

Will in man or in God; Voluntary Moral Being is *its own law.* There is, indeed, a law to which the created will *ought to be* subject, to which it is formed to be subject, and in chosen subjection to which its true freedom consists. But there is no law which it *must*, as of foreign necessity, obey. These two things are essentially opposed, Will and Law, Voluntary being and being acting necessarily as it is acted upon. A law is the expressed will of another. If the will of another, in itself, *necessitates* a certain mental state in me, there is no possible sphere for the exercise of my will; but if it be left to my choice to coincide or not with the will of another, in this case, but only in this case, I am in the fullest sense voluntary. My will and the expressed will of another *may* perfectly coincide; there may be no just cause why they should not, and in a perfect creature, this entire coincidence of choice with the highest Law — that is, of the finite with the Infinite Will—is realised. The free choice of such a creature and the Divine law are in blessed and unbroken harmony; but will, as will, is essentially distinct from law as law. In vain do we attempt to explain

de la Liberté. (Cours de l'Histoire de la Philosophie. Tom. ii. pp. 502. 509. Paris: 1829.)

the phenomena of human volition on principles analogous to those on which we account for material phenomena; the last can all be resolved into the action of pervading and irresistible forces, but if in any similar way we interpret the action of the will, we destroy its very nature. It is beginning with a fallacy, to search for a reason in Law, for a choice, because the ultimate reason must be the independent act of the free worker himself. He has so elected; this may literally be all, and no *rational* explanation *why* he has so elected, may be possible. The human will *ought* to be in harmony with the highest law, that of God, but it cannot be compelled; it may act in the face of law, of reason, and no cause whatever can be assigned, except itself. It belongs to man to choose, and his choice finds its *ultimate* ground, often its *only* ground, in himself.

The self-determining power of the Will is a palpable misnomer. Will is only the name for a particular fact in the constitution of the human soul, a particular attribute with which the Maker has endowed it. When a man forms a deliberate preference, he exhibits this attribute, he verifies this fact in his constitution. But will is a thing, not a being, an agent. It is absurd to say that *it* determines itself. It itself has no real objective existence,

except in its embodiment in an act, and only in the moment of the act. The reasoning by which President Edwards demolishes this fallacy is unanswerable. But, meanwhile, it may yet be true that *man* determines himself. The reasoning, which is resistless as against the former position, may be futile when directed against this position. We hold that it is. The self-determining power, not of the will, but of the being endowed with will, of man, is only a significant mode of announcing the fact, which consciousness attests with such emphasis, that he is voluntary and independent. Possessing the faculty of choosing, he is *in choosing* self-governed, self-determined.

But this constitutional self-government of the human soul does not involve indifference to good and to evil, a moral equilibrium, in no degree more inclined to one side than another. The only perfect moral freedom in the universe is that, which ever owns the supremacy of truth and right, and is in uninterrupted harmony with them. The Eternal knows no equilibrium, no indifference, but an infinite inclination to good and an infinite abhorrence of evil; and the higher and the more perfect the Created Nature is, the more complete in this respect will be its assimilation to the Divine, and with the

more entire voluntariness and the more conscious delight will it yield itself to the control of Truth and of Moral law: *but it must yield itself.* Conscience and Reason are the ordained guides of the Created mind. In themselves, and on every ground, whether of duty or of interest, they are *entitled* to be its guides. The intimations of these powers are the more sacred, the more awful, that they are felt to express the very will of the Creator. Were the human soul perfect and infallible, these intimations would be for ever paramount to it; but it is so constituted at the same time, that this result can in no way be necessitated from without: there can be no *must* to it. It may or it may not decide for truth and right, but whether it does or not, must depend on itself, ultimately and alone: there is no power out of itself that can necessitate its acting,—*it is its own law.*

If the reasonings which we have hazarded be sound, we are furnished with a short and decisive reply to many of the conclusions of an earlier metaphysical theology. "The Will always follows the last judgment, the last dictate of the understanding"—this has been accepted as revealing the law of the will; the invariable and necessary order of its movement; the constitution according to which

it acts, according to which it must act. On the principles which have been advanced, we are entitled to assert, not only that *this* is not the law of the will, but that there is and can be *no* law to the will, in the sense here meant. Will is power, liberty to choose; Law, in the sense here meant, is necessitating force, force which there is no possibility of resisting: these two things are mutually destructive. The Being endowed with the faculty of Will is his own law,—that is, he is a true causer, producing effects apart from any other cause.

The will *may* follow the dictate, and the last dictate of the understanding: in rational beings, who are true to their nature, the will *always* follows the dictate of the understanding and the conscience; because they are perfect and so long as they are perfect, their powers act in harmony, and the moving principle is faithful to the design and meaning of its formation. But, in point of fact, the will in man often does not follow the decision of the judgment, and this is the very evil and sin that it does not: in cases without number, in the large proportion of cases which the moral history of men presents, the will does not follow the last judgment. It is unaccountable blindness to the most glaring facts of consciousness to assert, that what a man wishes

and chooses, he must at the moment *judge* best on the whole. On the very contrary, we maintain it, as the most undeniable fact, that he may not *judge*, may *not think*, at all at the moment, but only strongly *feel* and *desire;* he may not suffer himself to think, and may forcibly suppress and put away from him every dictate of his judgment: his judgment, if he listen to it for an instant, instead of favouring his choice, may be directly and vehemently opposed to it.

When, again, it is said, "the will is always as the prevailing inclination of the soul;" or again, "it is always as *the greatest apparent good;*" or when this last is still farther explained, and it is said, "the will always follows that which, on the whole, at the moment, is most *pleasing*, most *agreeable* to it" (*this*, it is expressly avowed, is what is meant by *the greatest apparent good*), there is a sense in which every one of these different forms of definition may be accepted, in which, indeed, they are only the *merest truisms*. Willing, choosing, does exhibit the *prevailing inclination* of the soul, does show what is on the whole *most pleasing*, *most agreeable* to it at the moment; in other words, what on the whole it prefers. But nothing is gained hereby, and an interpretation of the phenomena of volition, their ground, and their logical

sequence, is as far to seek as ever. Moreover, we must be on our guard lest, in these definitions, which are true so far as they go, but are not unconditionally and universally true, there be not intended a one-sided interpretation. The words "prevailing inclination," "greatest apparent good," "most pleasing, most agreeable to the soul," are very general, even ambiguous. On two sides they may convey what is thoroughly and palpably false.

On the one hand, when it is said a thing chosen must be the *most pleasing*, *most agreeable* to the soul at the moment, we ask, most pleasing and agreeable to what? Is it meant to conscience and reason? If so, the statement is glaringly untrue. A choice may be, and often is, utterly repugnant to conscience and reason; both may vehemently denounce it at the moment, or neither may be suffered to utter its voice. A choice may be founded not on judgment, not on moral conviction, but on feeling and passion. Passion and feeling may for the time overmaster the understanding and the moral nature. The very essence of moral evil is, that it is violence done to the rightful governing powers of the soul: if men always obeyed only these, their ordained guides, they could not be charged with crime.

On the other hand, is it meant *most pleasing*

agreeable to the appetites, the passions, the feelings; in general, to what we currently distinguish as the inclinations? If so, this must be no less positively denied. The martyr at the stake deliberately chooses torture and death; but pain has not therefore changed its character to him; *his* nature, like that of every other human being, recoils from it. But that which he shudders even to think of, which is inexpressibly repugnant to his feelings, and to his sentiment being, he yet chooses, deliberately and with his whole soul determines and prefers to meet. The very highest virtue on this earth is that which resists the solicitation of what is simply pleasing and agreeable, which crucifies appetite, passion, feeling, inclination, and at all costs and at all hazards obeys the voice of Conscience and Reason.

One other of the accepted conclusions of what we make bold to designate a false and pestilent metaphysics, may here be noticed—"The will is always determined by the strongest motive."

That influence, be it what it may, which at last overcomes the being—or, rather, with which he connects himself—is in point of fact, beyond all question, the strongest to him at the moment; he voluntarily, independently, *makes* it (not *finds* it) the strongest. It cannot surely be meant that in this

way the real and essential worth, the real, comparative force, of all the appeals which are addressed to the mind is ascertained? That motive which is actually adopted is the strongest *in fact*; but surely it cannot be meant that it must also be the strongest *in itself*, its essential force considered. On the contrary, it is certain that the strongest in fact is often the weakest in reality; the understanding may at the moment pronounce it to be the weakest, and the conscience may pronounce it to be the most wicked. It is the strongest in fact, for *it* is accepted and *the others* are refused; but that it is *really* the strongest, and that only because it is the strongest it commands, and cannot but command, the will, is surely too monstrous to be believed. The very essence of crime is, that it is not necessary but voluntary; that the force to which the will yields it might and could have resisted,—in other words, that, by a higher exercise of the understanding and the conscience, it might and could have made a perfectly opposite choice;—that it did not, is just on this account, and no other, its disgrace and its crime.

It is clear as sunlight, that if, in every instance, the motive to which the Will yields *in fact* be one to which it yields *necessarily*, to which it must and cannot but yield, then all human actions, however

vicious or virtuous, are as inevitable as the falling of the rain or the movement of the planets. There can be neither virtue nor vice in the first any more than in the second, and a system of universal and unmitigated fatalism is the result.*

In the face of all this, Consciousness proclaims, in the most unambiguous terms, that the motive, the influence or combination of influences, to which the voluntary agent yields, may be the weakest in Reason and the wickedest in Conscience. The design of his constitution is, that passion, and desire, and inclination, whencesoever arising, should be under the government of his higher nature; but it is left to him to choose whether this order shall be maintained or not. He is endowed with absolute power of choice, with perfect liberty to choose; and it is in the exercise of this power, this liberty, that he chooses it shall not be maintained. No reason, no cause can be assigned for this result except himself—*he* chooses it: he ought to have, he might, he could

* Hobbes' Essay on Liberty and Necessity (Manchester, 1839); Spinoza Ethica, Prop. 32, corol. 1, 2: p. 63, also De Libertate Humana, vol. i.; and Principia Phil., de Vol. Dei, vol. ii. (Jena, 1802). It is passing strange that Spinoza, Hobbes, and Joh^n. Edwards should, in the issue, be thoroughly at one.

have made a different choice, but he did not, simply and only because *he would not.*

Here is the first indispensable condition of Responsibility. Men are voluntary beings, and it is just, therefore, and to this extent and no further, that they are responsible beings. So far as the course they take is *their* choice, so far as they have been perfectly free to choose or refuse it, and have taken it simply because they chose it, so far but no farther can a reckoning justly be demanded of them. We are responsible for what is wholly our own doing, and is left wholly to our own option, but not for what is independent of us. That which my will neither causes nor can prevent, can, on no just ground, be charged to my account, and neither the merit nor the blame which it may involve can be attributed to me. That, on the other hand, which is truly my choosing, which I freely wished and of my own accord originated,—of which, therefore, I am strictly the causer, the voluntary causer,—brings upon me righteously either its punishment or its reward. Power, in the sense of perfect liberty to choose, is the *necessary condition* and the *exact measure* of responsibility.

II. But while man has power and is perfectly free

to choose for himself, is it equally certain that he is *so endowed* by his Maker, as to be capable of rightly using this faculty, this freedom, so as therefore to be justly responsible for his use of them? Moral power is not simply liberty of choice; it has a higher meaning, and includes capacity of exercising this liberty. This is the second indispensable condition of responsibility. A maniac or an idiot has his likings and dislikings, his preferences, his choices, but his ability, rationally and morally to choose, is gone, and his responsibility is gone with it. Voluntariness is an attribute of the lower animals; will in them is as real as it is in us, but it is limited in its range by their nature, their endowments, and their circumstances. Following out a legitimate analogy, we can believe that among human beings there may be great specific diversities of moral power with an entire generic similarity. All men alike are endowed with freedom of choice, with power to choose for themselves; but the range of this power, and the wise and virtuous exercise of it, may be, and in point of fact are found to be, exceedingly various.

It is very clear that men themselves may and do injure essentially, and even permanently, their own moral independence and strength. For such injury they are alone responsible. Men may impair their

intellect and sink into a condition of ignorance and imbecility; they may also misguide and pollute their affections, and, as a consequence of all this, they shall have, not indeed less freedom or less power to choose, but less ability to choose aright. Every false and vicious choice which a man makes, every choice at variance with the true ends of the moral organisation, is an injury to the faculty of Will itself; but an injury for which, with all its consequences, the wrongdoer himself is entirely accountable.

It is a law of our mental nature that habit adds a force, ever accumulating, whether to good or to evil principles, above what belongs to themselves simply. When the lower desires, instead of being resisted, are suffered to govern, the difficulty of resistance to them is palpably increased. By long habit, it is quite possible in this way so to weaken the power of the higher nature, and proportionally to augment the clamorous strength of the lower nature, that an individual may be said to have substituted in the place of his power of choice, a kind of moral necessity. But it is his own work, wholly and only, and can be the work of none else.

There is even a kind of physical necessity, under the tyranny of which many bring themselves; *but* they bring *themselves;* of their own choice alone, they

bring themselves under this cruel tyranny. The drunkard, for example, by long indulgence forms habits of intemperance which are bodily almost more than mental. He creates a state of positive disease, and at last his excesses are required to satisfy a physical craving over which his mind has lost almost all control. In this state, under an imperious physical necessity, he can scarcely be held responsible for his acts of intemperance; but he is responsible for bringing himself into this condition, and all the consequences resulting from it are legitimately thrown back upon him.

But it may be asked, is there no such thing as involuntary, and therefore irresponsible, moral incapacity? Nay, more, is there no such thing as actual moral malformation, involuntary and therefore irresponsible malformation? On the one hand, let us imagine a condition of semi-barbarism, though in the centre of a surrounding civilisation—perhaps even a surrounding Christianity—a condition in which human beings grow up without education, without knowledge, except such as is gained through the senses and flows into them spontaneously as every-day experience; in which they constantly breathe a polluted moral atmosphere, and witness scenes that are only shocking to right reason and to all morality.

No enlightened and candid person will deny, that such beings deserves to be called voluntary and responsible, in a far more limited sense than others. It admits of no question that their actions, almost their opinions and their principles, instead of being deliberately chosen by themselves, must often be virtually determined for them.* In their state of ignorance, and with prejudices and habits in great part the effect of circumstances, they are indeed as free, have as much power, to choose as ever, but the power of choosing *aright* is glaringly and wofully circumscribed. They are not accountable for the fact being thus, because it originates in causes out of themselves, over which they have had no command. It is recognised at once, that their responsibility is limited by their power; *this* being obviously circumscribed compared with that of other men, their responsibility also is proportionally circumscribed. So far as they have received from their Maker, and so far as, under his providence, it has been in their power to retain and put forth a capacity of choosing for themselves, according to the law of reason and conscience;

* Part of the difficulty here is connected with the peculiar representationary, hereditary constitution under which human beings, as a race, are placed. This difficulty is treated at large at pp. 228–31.

so far as their principles, their opinions, and their actions are deliberate and voluntary, and not the necessary growth of their circumstances and their discipline,—so far they are perfectly accountable, but no farther. There are, and there *must be*, in this way, gradations of responsiblity; and the patent fact is that these gradations of responsibility *must* correspond with the diversities of intellectual and moral endowment and development among human beings.

On the other hand, we cannot be ignorant of the fact, that physical constitution and temperament exert a powerful influence over the use of reason and of conscience, and therefore also over the determinations of the will. Passion, in several of its modes, is connected with the condition of the blood, the brain, the nervous system, and the physical organisation generally. It is the appointed office of the higher, especially the moral, powers of the soul to regulate and govern the lower appetites and affections; and for the human race as a whole the governing power is consciously adequate; and the lawless outbreaks of passion, in whatever form, are not irresistible, but are felt to be owing solely to the voluntary perversity of the being, who could and might, but will not, command and quell them. The violent rage to

which men resign themselves, the discontent, the acerbity, the jealousy, the envy, and the fleshly lusts which they indulge, are not physical misfortunes, but moral crimes, which they deliberately perpetrate, and were endowed with abundant power to avoid. But there are tendencies to acts, otherwise meriting to be called crimes, which are physically irresistible. The tendency, arising solely from bodily, constitutional causes, to madness, is an extreme verification of this position. The mind may become thoroughly deranged; the reason, and of course the conscience, may lose their power; but the individual is a sufferer, not a criminal. And much short of this issue, wherever a tendency is physically invincible, wherever it has arisen from causes which we did not create, and over which we have no control, there and to this extent responsibility has certainly ceased.

These principles rest upon the foundation of immutable rectitude, and no reasonings, however apparently profound, and however logically constructed, must be suffered to shake our faith in their validity. The sense of responsibility is a universal consciousness; but this is not more sure nor more widely extended in conscious humanity than is the sense of moral liberty and of moral ability. The two are inseparable. Where we are conscious

that, without fault of ours, we had not strength sufficient for the exigency,—that either an action was not the result of our choice, or that, owing to causes which we did not create, and could not control, we were incapable of choosing otherwise,—precisely so far as we are conscious of this, we are troubled by no sense of guilt, and made happy by no sense of merit. But the sense of guilt we cannot throw off,—or, on the other hand, the delight of an approving conscience we cannot suppress,—where we feel that we were first free, and second so endowed as to be able, to have left a thing undone or to have done it, and that we did it or left it undone simply because we chose to do it or to leave it undone. In spite of fallacious theories of physical and moral necessity, human nature proclaims with one voice, Moral Responsibility, Moral Freedom, and Moral Ability. In the profound but clear depths of his consciousness, man finds it revealed that he must give account of himself to God; but the reason, the ground of this announcement is made known simultaneously with it. It is this,—that his actions are his own; that he is free and able to act and not to act, according to his own choice; the moral good and the moral evil of his course *therefore*,—but *only therefore*, *thus far*, and *only thus far*,—are righteously attributable to him.

SECTION III.

MORAL EVIL, THE VOLUNTARY ABUSE OF MORAL POWER.

MATERIAL, MORAL UNIVERSE—RESISTING FORCE IN MORAL, NOT IN MATERIAL—MEN, PERSONS, NOT THINGS—CRIME, REALITY AND SPREAD—DILETTANTE MORALITY—MORAL ANTITHESIS—PHILOSOPHICAL NECESSITY, LEIBNITZ, SOAME JENYNS—MATTER, SEAT OF EVIL—HIGHER LAWS OF MAN'S BEING—ESSENCE OF CRIME, VOLUNTARINESS—SUSPENSION OF LAW OF GRAVITATION—MORAL DISORDER—MYSTERY OF CREATED WILL—ALMIGHTY RESISTED—MORAL POWER, FREEDOM, LICENTIOUSNESS.

MORAL UNIVERSE.

THE contrast between the material and the moral spheres is deeply affecting. The physical universe is a magnificent harmony. Even our planetary system, —the sun with the planets and their satellites for ever peacefully fulfilling their distinct offices,—is a beautiful revelation of order and of law. Each of the planetary systems that enrich immensity is another such exquisite revelation. Perhaps each star in the mighty concave, each atom of starry dust, each speck of starry vapour, and each of the myriads on myriads of luminous points which no human eye, no telescopic power has reached, but whose existence science infers with undoubting confidence,—each is not a unit but a system. Perhaps these systems again, each perfect in itself, are not separate and isolated, but beautifully arranged, the one to the other,—units in a grander whole, the distinct and varying notes of a mighty symphony, all blending to produce a full diapason of song, the music of the revolving spheres, that matchless melody which ravishes the ear of God.

Moral, unlike material harmony, perhaps is yet to be, but it *is* not. We believe that the spiritual universe *has* its ideal, ere long to be realised, and

that it is not, as it may seem to us to be, without law and without aim. Perhaps its *destined* harmony is as perfect as that of the visible creation, and unutterably more beauteous: and tokens and evidences of this beauteous Future may be discoverable, amidst present and far spread disorder. Those grand and eternal principles, in which rational and moral being is founded, are no less real than the universal law of gravitation is in the sphere of nature. Righteousness, Truth, and Love are the ordained governing laws of created mind. The Eternal Fact was and is, and ever shall be, that all blessedness, all wisdom, all honour, all safety, all life (in this region) are identified with the reign of these principles. The slightest departure from them is inevitably productive of evil and can be productive of nothing else. No power in the universe could make it otherwise, and no volition, no act of the Highest was needed to make it as it is. Created Mind is formed to be in harmony with these laws; in order to its very *being*, as a constituted existence, it *must* be in harmony with them: it *loses* being, it parts with what enters into its essence, it deranges its constitution, it strikes at its very life, in departing from them. These are the very principles which are impersonated in the Infinite Nature. They are

the inalienable possessions of "The One." He is the Uncreated Subject, they are the Uncreated Modes. They *constitute* his essence, so far as it can be known by us. He *is* Righteousness, *is* Truth, *is* Love, and that which he is, is Infinitely and unchangeably beautiful in his sight. Will in God, absolutely free and spontaneous, is Infinite inclination to all Good, Infinite Love of all Good. No cause from within, and none from without, can ever arise to produce change. Ever and only there exists Infinite cause for permanence. And created minds are original likenesses of the Uncreated, the only likenesses which creation affords. They are the offspring of God,* children of the Universal Father, bearing, as far as is possible to creatures, the image of the Creator. *Their* nature is after the Infinite Pattern, and their destiny is to become like Him from whom they sprang, and peacefully and joyously to rise into His image. There *is* an *ideal* harmony to which the moral universe is appointed; the constitution of moral being and its governing laws predict, if they have not secured it. They have not secured it, it has not been secured; the harmony is yet *ideal*, not actual, and the funda-

* Γένος τοῦ Θεοῦ, Acts, xvii. 29.

mental reason lies in *this*, that Men are persons not *things*, not acted upon merely by influences, however holy and sovereign, but themselves consciously, voluntarily acting.

The material creation consists of things not persons —unconscious, involuntary, powerless things. The laws which govern *them* are obeyed implicitly, uninterruptedly; they cannot be disobeyed. Indeed, truly, they are neither obeyed nor disobeyed. They are simply the resistless Divine power exerted in a region where all is passive, and where resistance is impossible. Irregularity in such a region could originate only in the great Mover himself, in a defect of his power, or in a change in his purpose. But in the Moral Universe there are other Movers besides the Almighty, other wills besides his, over which his physical omnipotence can have no control. They might be crushed, annihilated in a moment by his power; but so long as they exist *as wills*, physical omnipotence has no relation to them. A human mind is endowed with a power which the Creator can influence by his truth and his spirit, but which even *he* cannot necessitate. It is the abuse of this mysterious faculty which has filled the world with all the varieties and with an overwhelming amount of suffering and crime.

With those who deny the reality of Moral Evil,—who see nothing worse in human agency than the necessary effect of circumstances, of unavoidable ignorance or weakness,—who make no essential distinction between deliberate murder and self-sacrificing kindness, and who maintain that the one is no crime and the other no excellence, no virtue,—we can here have no controversy. They have to learn the elementary principles of moral truth. All the languages of the many-tongued earth are full of words, that not only have no meaning, but are deliberate falsehoods, unless they involve the distinction between crimes and weaknesses or faults of judgment. The laws of all nations are a pitiful burlesque; the daily conversation of men is a practised deception on one another; the natural, the deepest convictions of men are a cruel mockery, except on this ground.

Not only the reality, but the sweeping extent of moral evil is so palpable, that they who do not acknowledge it, must be either blind or insane, or they must avow what they know to be untrue. Injustice, falsehood, treachery, licentiousness, cruelty, by the unanimous verdict of the sane world, are not weaknesses, not unavoidable errors, but crimes,—dark, detestable crimes.

Some of the more refined of the early English

Deists, copying not the purest of the ethical schools of Greece, represent sin as an offence against taste rather than against conscience.* It is a violation of the moral unities, a defect of æsthetic culture, an obtuseness of the sense of the beautiful. The simple but unanswerable objection to this is, that it falls immeasurably below the facts of experience and of consciousness. There *is* a moral taste, and crime is its depravation; there is moral beauty, and crime may be defined moral deformity and ugliness. But there is something in it far darker and more hateful, which this mode of representation cannot convey. The mind of the moral transgressor is conscious of a kind, and an amount, of demerit, which it is worse than trifling, it is cruel, to speak of in the terms of a dilettante morality. When reason and conscience are violated, and the Great God of all himself defied, can it be borne that this is to be measured by the laws of taste, the insipid maxims of a refined cultivation? The physician would exhibit neither his good sense nor his good feeling, who should describe a dangerous, perhaps mortal wound, by saying that its form was inartistic, and its general appearance out of keeping with the laws of the beautiful.

* Shaftesbury's "Characteristics."

Something like Swedenborg's doctrine of correspondences, or rather Jacob Boehme's notion of what we may call the antithetic and dualistic forms in nature, has found its way into the region of ethical speculation. Male and female, body and soul, day and night, heat and cold, summer and winter, north and south, attraction and repulsion, positive and negative poles, are among the many contraries of which nature is the repository, and to which the character of necessity seems to belong. We cannot conceive nature without them, they seem essential to its completeness. A one-sided creation would be unsymmetrical and monotonous. It is argued that this characteristic must be no less essential in mind than in nature; there must be moral antitheses, a moral as well as a material polarity. Evil and good must be alike necessary, and together constitute a *completed* moral universe. It can scarcely be doubted, that that ruthless logic of Germany which proclaims the identity of contraries*, and with equal ease makes nothing something, and something nothing, and something and nothing together a

* Hegel's Encyclopädie, Erster Theil, die Wessenschaft der Logik. Heidelburgh, 1827. See also Spinoza, Ethica, vol. i. of Works. Jena, 1802.

reality which neither alone could be, has done much to extend a theory which is perverse in every region, but in morals must be full of the deadliest mischief. One grieves to meet ever and again, at the present day, in writers of a mystic and dreamy genius, the influence of a lurking idea that evil is not really evil, but is essential to good. Like darkness and light, evil is necessary to reveal the true nature, to impress with the worth, and to deepen the glow, of good. Both are alike indispensable, and belong to the necessary constitution of the universe. Two things are forgotten. First, evil is not the necessary complement of good, else the Great Being is imperfect. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all:" there is one nature in which evil is not needed to constitute perfect excellence. Second, on this theory the mingling and *the conflict* of evil with good must be everlasting; and it would be a sorrowful destiny for created being, even for the God of all, were such the dismal prospect.

But are we not compelled, it is asked, in conceiving a universe, to conceive also along with it the existence of evil? Without confounding evil with good, or imagining that it is inevitable as the complement of good, are we not yet obliged to presume

its existence.* Gradation, at all events limitation, in created beings, we cannot escape; even if we imagine not different races differently endowed, but one race, constituted on a common principle, be the endowments of this race what they may, they must be limited; in one direction and another, in all directions to some extent, they must ever fall below *perfection.* Limitation, defect of good, is not this evil? And limitation in created being there *must be; the sufficient reason* for this is ever found in its essential constitution. Limitation is undoubtedly evil in one sense; it may justly be so called: the doctrine of philosophical necessity, the principle of the sufficient reason, is thus far unexceptionable. Imperfection *may* be called evil, but *can* it also be called crime? Certainly not; and herein lies the strength of the objection to this mode of representing sin, an objection perfectly fatal. Moral evil is not a negative, but a dire and malignant positive. The transgressor is not conscious of a mere imperfection, an imperfection above all necessarily belonging to his being, without fault of his: he is perfectly conscious, not of yielding to weakness, but of wilfully misusing

* Soame Jenyns' Inquiry, London, 1757. King's Essay on the Origin of Evil. Cambridge, 1758. Leibnitz, Essais de Thod. Amsterdam, 1712, pp. 112—125.

power, conscious of having positively done something which he need not have done, and which he did simply because he *would* do it.

The notion of matter being the seat and source of evil,—eternal matter and eternal God,—of a dualism in the universe and in each individual, is very ancient, very natural, and, on some sides, even suggestive of truth. A large class of human crimes have undeniably a material origin, and a large number besides can be resolved more or less remotely into material causes. But when it is maintained, that crime is nothing else than the revolt of the animal against the rational nature, the position is assailable on two grounds. First, the possibility of moral evil in purely spiritual natures would then be denied. Second, consciousness assures every human being that there are crimes, of which he is guilty, that are not dependent in their origin, their motive, or any of their relations, on his material organisation. But were the position generalised, and were it maintained that crime is the revolt of the lower against the higher nature of man, including in the lower all except conscience and reason, we are prepared to accept the terms as a true and comprehensive definition. In every instance of wrong-doing, the voice of reason and conscience have

been overborne and something lower than they, has been obeyed. Crime is always a departure not only from God, but from wisdom, from purity, from rectitude, from safety, from true good. In that act, the voluntary agent has either not suffered the higher governing powers of his mind to speak, or he has perversely disregarded them and chosen some other guidance for the time. He is free,—that is one side, but he is not therefore released from the everlasting imperative, "the ought,"—that is the other side. His will is a law to itself, but he is not therefore irresponsible, on the contrary, he is *on this very account* responsible, in the highest imaginable degree.

Man is under Law. With all his powers and endowments of every kind—that of will included—he is under the obligations of law, and must render account of the use he has made of every gift wherewith his nature has been enriched. Power has been entrusted to him, but not irresponsible power. It is given to him, of his own free choice, to determine his course, whether by the higher or by the lower laws of his being, but what that course *ought to be* is no uncertainty and no contingency. The path of safety, of honour, of wisdom, of moral excellence, is set luminously before him. He has guides from within which point to that path with no unsteady

hand, and it is at his peril if he abandon such holy guidance and turn to darkness and crime. But it is left entirely to his option. Moral evil is always a free, though a perverse choice, a conscious product of the human will and of nothing else. It has many sides, and admits of as many different definitions, but this characteristic of *voluntariness* must enter into them all.

In its first and nearest aspect it is resistance to conscience and reason. But these, again, are the voice of The Infinite *in* man, and it thus becomes violation of the Supreme Will. The nature and will of The Most High reveal the eternal and immutable constitution of things, and it thus becomes rebellion not merely against Him, but against all moral order and law, against the essential and necessary principles of the Intelligent, Moral Universe. But in whichever of its many aspects it be regarded, its *essential feature* remains the same—*wilful abuse of moral liberty, moral power.* The perfect voluntariness of moral evil, of all moral evil, is a first, a fundamental principle. The wrong-doer is conscious to himself, at the moment, that what he does, he does of his own choice and by his own fault. In the act of crime, he is as convinced as he is of his own existence, that no *foreign* compulsion is exerted

upon him, and that no condition of *mere invincible passivity* is induced within him; convinced that he might have and that he could have done otherwise, and that the only reason why he did wrong was that he wished, chose, determined to do wrong. It is its voluntariness, and *its voluntariness only*, that constitutes his deed a crime. He knew that it was wrong. Conscience and Reason, his ordained guides, proclaimed it wrong. But it was left to him to make his own election, and he was unfaithful to the trust. The voluntary abuse of moral power is moral evil.

Here is the mystery, the profound and awful mystery, of created will. In its very nature it is capable of resisting the Uncreated; it has, in fact, resisted him. The power which he conferred has been wilfully, wickedly abused, in order to violate his laws and to disturb and embroil his government. Moral liberty, degenerating to licentiousness, moral power wilfully perverted, *is* moral evil, *alone* is moral evil; and the origin, the sole origin, of this plague in the universe, is the voluntary abuse of power and freedom by the created being.

If we could conceive one of the planets by some means able to overcome the combined action of the centripetal and centrifugal forces,—if we could con-

ceive an immense number of planets, belonging to various systems, breaking loose and rushing lawlessly forth into space, coming into collision not with one another only, but with the globes and systems that pursued their ordained course,—even this terrific crash of worlds would feebly represent the vast disorder, the havoc and the ruin, of the moral universe. A holy privilege, a dignity of the most sacred kind, has become an almost unmitigated curse. The record of the present condition of the world, the history of all nations and of all past ages, is one of manifold crime and of suffering as varied, the never-failing consequent of crime.

But The Holy One is blameless! We assert it and shall strive to exhibit it. Man, in defiance of his Maker, is the creator of evil on this earth.

SECTION IV.

THE CREATOR INFINITELY OPPOSED TO MORAL EVIL.

PHYSICAL EVIL CONCEIVABLE — MORAL EVIL UNALTERABLY, INFINITELY HATEFUL—LANGUAGE OF EARLIER THEOLOGY—MOTIVE IN CREATING—NO CONSCIOUS END, HIGHER THAN HIGHEST END — BENEVOLENCE, MORAL EXCELLENCE, ITS OWN END—NECESSITY OF CREATION?—COUSIN—RESISTLESS, CREATIVE LOVINGNESS — UNIVERSE INTELLIGENT, MORAL, VOLUNTARY — WILL, NOT NECESSITABLE — RESISTANCE TO GOD A DAILY FACT—FIRST FALSE CHOICE, INPREVENTIBLE —BLASPHEMY, GOD COULD PREVENT, DID NOT—EDWARDS—FOREKNOWLEDGE — GOD ETERNAL ANTAGONIST OF MORAL EVIL.

GOD'S ANTAGONISM TO EVIL.

MIGHT not a Good Being sanction suffering, if by this means a higher moral advantage,—higher wisdom, higher purity, higher spiritual strength, higher perfection and blessedness of Life,—were secured to the sufferer? Undoubtedly he might: it is not inconceivable that a Good Being might even sanction suffering (involving no real and permanent injury) in the case of one creature, for the sake of higher perfection and blessedness to other creatures though not to itself. In this case difficulty, to some extent, would be created, and in spite of ourselves we should feel that a shade rested on the providence of the All-Perfect, which it would be a most welcome relief to be able entirely to clear away.

But no amount of good—not an eternity of physical or moral good to myriads of beings—could compensate moral evil, could justify its existence. It is unrighteousness, falsehood, essential wrong, violation of the dictates of conscience and of reason. Be its amount what it may, be it ever so minute, ever so trivial, as we might speak, Eternal Right, and Eternal Reason cry out against it, declare that

it must not, shall not be, that nothing can ever justify it, that it is only and wholly and unchangeably wrong. Every mind in harmony with conscience and reason abhors it, can do no other than abhor it utterly. Whatever consequences it may be possible to produce from it, it *must* not be: the very suggestion of consequence is an atrocious offence, as if *this* were a thing that could admit of being calculated. Evil, moral evil is moral evil still, if it should lead to ever so great good (though this indeed is impossible; an absurdity, a contradiction of the grossest kind) and is only to be resisted and detested; no vindication of it, on any ground, can be listened to for a moment; it *must not be.*

Do we then hesitate to form and pronounce an opinion, how "The Uncreated," The necessary Guardian of Rectitude and Truth, in whose nature the reigning laws of the moral universe have their foundation, of whose essence they are the Eternal modes—how *He* must regard the remotest approach to what is morally wrong? Be the difficulties what they may, on other sides, be they for ever insoluble, there is no difficulty *here*, and there must be no hesitation. Wherever, whenever moral evil arose, even in the minutest conceivable form, The Supreme *must* have been Infinitely opposed to it: Reason,

Conscience, Inclination, Will in Him, The entire Divine nature, *must* have been Infinitely opposed to it. It is of *His* very Essence to be opposed to what is essentially wrong: we alter, we destroy his essence, if we suppose any thing else. There cannot be two wills in Him: His nature cannot be divided against itself, so as in one aspect of it to be opposed, and in another inclined, to wrong. If, for any reason, we imagine any thing but unchangeable abhorrence of evil in the Divine mind, any secret disposition to its introduction, on account of certain prospective results, there is then no trust for creatures ever more; there is no God; the Infinitely Pure, the foundation of immutable virtue, the object of unmixed veneration, is gone. Creatures, in perpetrating crime—injustice, falsehood, impurity, cruelty—are carrying out, in however indirect a sense, the secret inclination or intimation of their Maker; at least, they are not altogether and only opposing him. There is thenceforth no sin to them. What is done by Him, in his sphere, it cannot be criminal for them to do in their sphere. If *He* be not *wholly* disinclined to what is morally wrong, if it be possible for him, on any ground, to allow it, *they* also may calculate consequences and allow evil, that good may come.

One recoils with unmingled horror from the language often employed on this subject by an earlier theology, the bane of which (as of much that is even yet current) it is not difficult to perceive was a false philosophy, a vicious dialectic. "If it be objected," says Soame Jenyns,* "that this makes God the author of sin, I answer, God is, and must be, the author of everything; and to say that anything is, or happens, independently of the first cause, is to say that something exists or happens without any cause at all... If misery brings with it its utility, why may not wickedness?

'If storms and earthquakes break not Heaven's design,
Why then a Borgia or a Cataline?'

Wherefore it ought always to be considered that, though sin in us, who see no farther than the evils it produces, is Evil, and justly punished, yet in God, who sees the causes and connections of all things, and the necessity of its admission, that admission is no evil at all, and that necessity a sufficient vindication of his goodness." Even Jonathan Edwards betrayed by a love of metaphysical subtlety, shall say,† "There is no inconsistency in supposing that God

* Inquiry into the Nature and Origin of Evil. Letter 4th, London, 1757.

† Freedom of the Will, Part IV. section 9. London, 1818.

may hate a thing, as it is in itself and considered as evil, and yet that it may be His will that it should come to pass, considering all consequences. I believe there is no person of good understanding who will venture to say, he is certain that it is impossible it should be best, taking in the whole compass and extent of existence, and all consequences in the endless series of events, that there should be such a thing as moral evil in the world. And if so, it will certainly follow that an infinitely wise being, who always chooses what is best, *must choose that there should be such a thing;* and if so, then such a choice is not an evil, but a wise and holy choice; and if so, then providence, which is agreeable to such a choice, is a wise and holy providence. Men do will sin, as sin, and so are the authors and actors of it; they love it as sin, and for evil ends and purposes. God does not will sin as sin, or for the sake of anything evil; though it be *his pleasure so to order things* that, He permitting, *sin will come to pass*, for the sake of the great good, that by his disposal shall be the consequence. *His willing to order things so that evil shall come to pass*, for the sake of the contrary good, is no argument that he does not hate evil as evil." It amounts to this: the Most High, in effect, *wills* crime to be perpetrated; *this* is *his pleasure;* for the

sake of a great good, he *chooses* that there shall be such a thing. The words are tremendously dishonouring to the Ever Blessed Being, are blasphemously false. Instead of "*not venturing* to say, that it is impossible that the existence of moral evil should be the best for the universe on the whole," we deem it impious to venture to say anything else. The most vital and fundamental of all truths is this, that it is of the nature of God to be opposed, not officially and rectorally but in the deepest depths of his Being, to moral wrong; that in *His* mind no amount of good could justify the slightest departure, even for an instant, from Eternal and Immutable rectitude, purity, and truth, and that the contemplation of such a departure by the Great Being, with anything but unmixed abhorrence, would involve a destruction of His Very Essence. That the Only Holy One should will, decree the introduction of crime, of violence to Conscience and Reason, truth and right; that he should choose it as on the whole best; that he should even *permit* it, in the sense which this word is intended to convey; that at the moment when it in fact entered the universe, although he could have prevented it, he should have withdrawn himself, and, for the sake of some prospective good, have suffered it to enter; so that

altogether while he did nothing actively, he yet did everything indirectly; and on the whole evinced that the issue was not contrary to his will. By whatever reasonings such positions are upheld, they are inexpressibly horrible, they destroy the foundation and the soul of virtue, and they are fatal to the honour, the moral character, and the very being of the Most High. They *must* be false, else there is no Virtue in the universe, and no Eternal Being whom creatures can worship and love. The clearest, most compact, and best constructed arguments can have no weight, no force here: we may be quite unable to detect and expose their fallacy, but they *must* be unsound. This at least is true, if there be no other truth in the Universe,—the Holy One was, is, ever will, ever must be, Infinitely opposed to crime.

How then could this accursed thing be introduced into the Universe? *That* is the awful question. Perhaps one earlier and even profounder stands in no remote connection with this, and demands to be first answered. Wherefore did a Universe exist at all? Why did The Infinite Being put forth creative power? Had there been no creation, there had then been no moral evil. The Unconditioned, The Absolute, existed Alone, a Plenitude, not a Vacuity, an

Infinite Plenitude; a Consciousness, an Activity, a Capacity and a Fountain of Blessedness, Infinitely Self-sufficient. This *was* the Eternal Fact. But it is not now the only fact. Being is no longer a Unity. The One still is, unchanged and unchangeable. But there are also, The Many. Wherefore this new fact? What is the final Cause of the Creation?

The transition, from the Unconditioned to the conditioned, is incomprehensible by the human intellect. What creation is, how it was possible, and how it became a realised fact, are incomprehensible; it is confessed on all hands that they are absolutely incomprehensible. Shall we then imagine, that, though we be thus ignorant of *the nature* and *the mode* of this stupendous fact, we may nevertheless understand its primitive ground, its reason and motive? Shall we think to unveil the Infinite Soul at that moment when, according to our own conceptions, the Eternal Uniformity was interrupted, and when a new mode of being, absolutely unintelligible to us, was first introduced? Shall we think to grasp all the views which were present to that Soul, extending from the unbeginning past to the unending future; think to fathom all its purposes and to analyse all its

motives? If anywhere, we must *here* resolutely repel everything like dogmatical interpretation; whatever is put forth, must be put forth only as conjectural, at all events partial, belonging far more to the surface than to the depths of the subject.

"God can have no higher end in anything than himself,"—so it has been often, epigrammatically and with much confidence, asserted. The aphorism is true in itself, but it is in great part inapplicable here, and, misapplied, it becomes an atrocious calumny on the Great Being. In the noblest sphere of activity, to have no end, is higher than to have the highest end. To uphold rectitude and truth, for the sake of the advantage which may result from them, is not to be virtuous. A just man is just no longer, when it is ascertained that his governing motive has been to secure the good that follows from a course of justice; he is prudent, but not virtuous. Virtue must be loved for its own sake, and obeyed, because it is loved. *Wisdom* necessarily contemplates ends, and is determined by their elevation and their fitness; but *virtue* is its own end, and, *as virtue*, is destroyed by the entertainment, at the moment, of any end besides. Moral excellence of every kind finds its highest reason in itself alone, and no longer exists, so far as

its motive rests on any other basis. And this is pre-eminently true of the excellence of Love. A generous, benevolent being, is one that acts, first of all, from internal impulse. Why does such a being seek the good of others, even sacrifice himself for their sake? No primitive reason can be assigned except the pure force of the principle of Love; you cannot account for it on the ground of mere wisdom, mere prudence; if it could be so interpreted, it would then cease to be what it is. He has, originally, *no end* in view; if he had, the essential character of his act would that moment be changed; a generous, loving nature, an internal force to which he freely yields, impels him; this is the utmost that can be said.

With all possible emphasis, therefore, we repeat, that in the noblest sphere of activity, to have no end is higher than to have the highest end. The moral, which finds its reason in itself alone, is far above the merely intellectual, which contemplates ends and calculates consequences. The Infinitely Wise Being beholds every object in its entire nature, relations, and consequences, and, in the exercise of his wisdom, pursues the noblest and loftiest ends; but we rise to a loftier elevation still, when we conceive of the Uncreated Nature, glowing with Rectitude, Purity, Truth, loving them for their own sake, and in-

fluenced not by the calculations of wisdom, but by the internal force of these principles themselves; and yet loftier still, when, in that Nature, we conceive of pure benevolence and generosity, welling up from the Infinite depths, and gushing forth in resistless energy to bless. If we could account for this, except by itself, if we could find an end, even the highest end, and thereby show that it was not purely and perfectly spontaneous, we should destroy all its worth as Love, and essentially alter its character.

The Glory of The Highest is eternally secure, in any case; everything that He does *must* inevitably reveal what he is, and commend him to the veneration and love of his creatures; but it is not glorifying, but dishonouring, to Him, to imagine that he must have an ulterior end in everything, and especially that that end must be himself. In all the outgoings of his moral nature, the end, the motive force, lies in the Moral Principles themselves. In all the overflowings of his Benevolence, he can have no end which is not contained in this pellucid fountain. He loves. Why? Wherefore? Because he loves, because this is his very essence, because his nature is an infinitely loving nature, and finds its delight in producing *happiness*, not in the low and limited

sense in which we often speak, but in the sense of real blessedness, the blessedness connected with exalted intellectual and moral excellence. Were he acting originally with a view to an end, and that end himself, he could no longer be Love. He might be wise and he might be just, promoting also the highest good of his creatures, but he would no longer be the being of pure, disinterested, unquenchable Love.

Is it unreasonable to conjecture that, perhaps here, a hint towards the solution of the problem of Creation may be found. Very far short is this, from a complete and all-inclusive interpretation. The problem, *in its entireness*, is necessarily insoluble. But, as a conjectural and at least partial exposition, this may not be inadmissible; it may not in itself be unnatural, not unsuited to human modes of thinking, not contradictory to other established principles; perhaps it may even possess more of verisimilitude, and afford greater satisfaction, securer rest to conscience and reason, than other suggestions for a like purpose. The idea of a *necessity* of Creation, broadly and baldly asserted, appears at first sight, incompatible with the freedom of the Almighty Creator. In the very fact, indeed, of Creation, it is involved that it seemed good to Infinite Rectitude, Wisdom, and Goodness, and that which seemed good

to Infinite Perfection, we may venture to think it was morally impossible but the Almighty must bring to pass, for the contrary would involve a defect, a fault in His Nature. But when this kind of reasoning is extended, and when, in such language as that of M. Cousin, it is asserted, that "God, if he be a cause, *can* create, and if he be an absolute cause, *cannot but* create, ... his eminent characteristic being an absolute creative force, which cannot but pass into action, it follows, not that creation is possible, but that it is necessary,"* we feel instinctively that the limits of reverent and diffident speculation have been transgressed. We may be unable to detect a single flaw in the reasoning; it is even quite possible that it may be essentially sound; but that which it brings out we are so little able to comprehend, and especially so little able to reconcile with established truths, that no practical use can be made of it, and it is more modest, if not more wise, to stop shot of it.

* Cours de Philosophie, Paris, 1828, V^me^. Leçon : "Dieu, s'il est une cause, peut créer et s'il est une cause absolue, il ne peut pas, ne pas créer . . . . . Son caractère éminent étant une force creatrice absolue, qui ne peut pas ne pas passer à l'acte il suit, non que la creation est possible mais qu'elle est necessaire."

Perhaps the same difficulties, in equal force, do not bear against the suggestion which has been hazarded—that the final cause of the creation, at once the impelling force in the act and its end, was the Irrepressible Lovingness of the Divine Nature. In that nature, Love can never be at variance with Infinite Wisdom and Infinite Rectitude, or with any of the Divine Perfections, but must ever be illustrative of them all. "The Uncreated," in all the movements of His Being, is a Harmony, A Unity; each Attribute in its manifestation is under the law of all the rest. But we may lawfully conceive now one and now another as specially put forth: and, therefore, we presume to imagine, that in that stupendous change, which was witnessed when Creation sprang forth, the reigning Power was Benevolence. If there be a *Necessity* of Creation at all, does it not seem most befitting, to picture only the necessity arising from an Infinitely Loving Nature? For ever and ever, gushed up with mighty force the Infinite Desire to produce spiritual blessedness and glory; welling from beneath, irrepressibly, irresistibly, it must flow forth, it must find vent for itself. It did. God spake, Ineffable, Irrepressible Love spake, and Creation was.

Here, perhaps, a feeble hint is suggested, which

may leave the awful subject a little less dark than before. Creative power *has been* put forth—the Universe exists. To our conceptions, the Necessity for this must be laid in the highest grounds of Rectitude and wisdom—perhaps highest of all, in the energy of Uncreated Benevolence. Had there been no creation, there could have been no moral evil. But to our conceptions, necessity there must have been, that a Creation should exist, else it had never existed, necessity in some sense, on some grounds, though we can never hope thoroughly to penetrate them. With greatest peace of mind, we fall back on the necessity of an Infinite and overflowing love, a quenchless desire to fill immensity with all possible forms of purity and joy. Here we shall rest; there must have been and could not but have been a Creation.

But a wider question arises, when this first has been resolved. Why is *the* creation such as actually exists? Had there been only a Universe of Matter, the introduction of moral evil would have been not less impossible, than had there been no creation at all. There is no crime in material nature; it is guilty of no resistance to Conscience and Reason, to God—properly speaking, there is no evil. The storm in its ravages, the ocean in its fury, the volcano, the earth-

quake, the thunder bursting in terrific peals, like a preternatural artillery, the lightning in its sudden flash, its extended blaze, its forked darts, or its gleaming tortuous stream—these and all such phenomena are no evils in themselves, not even irregularities, but exact manifestations of law and order, glorious, magnificent revelations of power, of wisdom, and of all-embracing harmony. Had animal existence been added to mere matter, even then, also, crime had been impossible. Perhaps so much cannot be said of physical suffering. In the incalculable ages prior to man's creation, which geology reveals, the same state of things which we now witness among the irrational tribes was verified; a vast and successive destruction of animal life took place. Living creatures then preyed on one another, and were formed with the necessary organs and instincts for this purpose. Pain and death were then realised facts, on an immensely extended scale, and through vast periods of time. It would be vain to deny that this creates *some* difficulty, when viewed in connection with the goodness of the Creator. But when one thinks of animal life as altogether dissociated from responsibility and futurity, as a short duration, and, while it lasts, almost unmingled enjoyment, when, besides, one thinks of the absolute necessity of a

period to animal existence by one means or other, of the decay, dissolution, and death of vegetables, and of the short pain of death to animals, the difficulty vanishes away, and requires no elaborate solution. We return to the position, that, with a universe peopled only by irrational animals, moral evil had been impossible. The earth might have presented its scenes of sublimity, grandeur, and beauty; land, sea, and sky might have been filled with manifold creatures, of exquisite structure and form, and capable of every variety of animal enjoyment; planets, suns, stars, and systems might have revolved in harmonious order, and adorned and enriched the mighty concave. Wherefore, then, we ask, was a universe created in which it was possible for moral evil, with all its train of physical evils, to arise?

A creation merely material, or even animal, had been a continual reflection on the Wisdom of the Creator. Manifestations of mere power, mere beauty, mere harmony had ever suggested the question, which they could not have answered, "For what purpose?" "To what end?" Themselves unconscious, ignorant, they must have ever required some addition, in order to complete their sense, to give them a meaning, and without this they must have been an empty parade, a purposeless ostentation. Like an unfinished sen-

tence, they must ever have dishonoured him who, having spoken so much, had yet not spoken more: we must add that Creation, in this case, had been an unmitigated selfishness. To enjoy the display of his own productive power, to look upon a not exalted reflection of himself, in not the highest aspect of His Nature, to gratify himself with the vision from *without*, and in merely material and sentient forms of that, which, in an infinitely higher sense, abode *within*, only for this The Great Being must have put forth his creative energy. So far as created mind, affection, susceptibility were concerned, immensity had still been a solitude. One eye alone there had been to take in the sense of beauty and grandeur, one heart alone to experience whatever delight was capable of being originated from this source, the eye, the heart of the Creator himself, and for him and him only, as a merely personal gratification, the creation had existed. The personal gratification, also, such as it was, must have been of a very inferior order. No reciprocity, no recognition, no intelligent appreciation, no thankfulness, no love; all thought and all feeling had been on the side of the Creator, and this, too, without the possibility of the faintest expression of his Infinite Love. Life, indeed, which we have supposed in the Creation, is itself a thing of joy, and

in the happy lives of myriads of irrational creatures there had been some token of God's goodwill. But in so brief an existence as theirs, one too so aimless, had there been no other, how poor, how unworthy of Infinite Benevolence had the token not been!

It appeals to every principle of Reason, to every idea of fitness, to every conception we are able to form of verisimilitude, that if there was to be a Creation at all, it must be intelligent and moral. If in some sense, on some grounds, wholly or partially incomprehensible by us, creation was necessary, this at least is plain, that, whatever necessity existed, existed for an intelligent, a moral creation. If again, as to our modes of conception, it reverently seems that the overflowing, irrepressible, Infinite Lovingness of the Divine Nature fulfilled any part in necessitating Creation, nothing can be more manifest than that *this* demanded intelligence and reciprocating affection. There *must* be beings, intimately allied and attached to the Great Being, who should not only understand and know and search after their Creator, and recognise him in the manifestations he should give of himself, but who should be in close union with him, should love him, and be blessed in loving him, and should be drawn toward him by the bond of a relationship, as intimate as could exist

between the Infinite and the finite. The awful, the overwhelming idea of *Paternity*,* in which there is so much that is impenetrable, with only here and there a gleam flashing through the darkness, rises to the Mind,—the Paternity of God and the childship of all souls. It is here, perhaps, that the problem of Creation finds what approaches nearest to a Solution. The Almighty Parent sends forth created likenesses of himself, beings rational and moral, bearing thus his image, capable of knowing and loving him, and, in consequence of their relation, under the most solemn responsibility to him, besides being by their constitution, within the sphere of the Eternal and Immutable Laws of Moral Life.

One step farther we are prepared and entitled to advance. An intelligent moral being, without inward power to choose, is not simply an anomaly, it is a pure contradiction. We may indeed, to such a being, contract the sphere of his outward agency within the narrowest possible limits, without affecting his essential constitution. He may be bound, hand and foot, unable to move a limb, to take a step. But *within*, as perfectly as if all this were reversed, he must form his own idea of everything, his own convictions of right or wrong, and must be as conscious

* "The Christ of History," pp. 131—140.

as ever of choices, preferences, decisions, unknown it may be, to every other creature, and without the slightest possibility of control from any other. It is impossible to conceive of intelligence and conscience, separated from this voluntariness, this uncontrolled power of choosing. The one is necessarily involved in the other; and even if it were not, what worth should *we*, and much more *the Infinite One*, attach to recognition, affection, moral principles, which were not spontaneous, but compulsory or mechanical. Intelligent appreciation, spontaneous gratitude, genuine unconstrained love, alone are of the slightest moral value. All else is pretence, mockery, degradation alike to the receiver and the offerer.

An intelligent, moral, voluntary, responsible Universe was alone possible, according to all human modes of judging, alone capable of fulfilling the inevitable conditions. Was it then impossible, absolutely impossible, so to guard and control the rational nature as to prevent its falling from integrity? If moral evil be simply the abuse of moral power, might not the exercise of this power by man have been placed within such conditions and under such protections, as to have rendered its abuse impossible?

We alter the form but not the spirit of such questioning when we ask, Is there a limit to the power

of the Almighty? Can a creature, *his own creature*, successfully withstand *Him?* That inscrutable mystery, a human will, the power of choosing for himself, with which the human being is endowed by his Maker,—is *this* able to resist the Most High? Hath He, in *this*, created a faculty, which *even he* cannot compel? It must be suggested that, even if this *were* the case, it would involve no limitation of the Divine *power*. Omnipotence, potence, of whatever kind, finite or infinite, has no relation to the action of the will. We might as well doubt the force of an argument, because it could not raise a weight from the ground, as think to detract from physical strength, because it can have no effect on a moral principle. In his Almightiness, God could in a moment quench the light of reason and of conscience, extinguish the Will, annihilate the being. But his power over the will, as an active principle, cannot be physical, but must be moral, that is to say, it can be exerted only through the conscience, the understanding, and the affections. The very utmost power which can be exerted through these channels must belong to Him; but the very utmost power of this kind, we have already found, cannot *necessitate* a choice.

On the grounds that have been elsewhere set

forth*, we maintain, that a voluntary, a responsible being cannot be compelled or made unconsciously passive, in willing. Such a being may be divested of all his inward powers, and of this power of will with the others, may be divested of his existence; but the power, the liberty of choosing remaining to him, *he* chooses, that means, he is not necessitated, and is not passive, but active. Considerations addressed to his understanding, his conscience, his affections, his appetites and passions, motives (as we speak) of every kind, and in every sort of combination, may be brought to bear on him; but if the power of choosing remain, it means that *he himself*, independently of every other being, shall prefer some one out of all the courses offered to him. What he *ought* to choose, on every ground of interest, wisdom, and duty, is one question; what he in fact does choose, is quite another question; *this* rests ultimately with himself, with himself alone.

Such is the essential nature of Will; it is not an effect of something preceding it, but itself a beginner, a causer of action. Whatever is merely acted upon and necessarily obeys the action of something else on it, is not Will; it is an instrument, not an actor.

* See pp. 114—160.

But must we therefore conceive, that there is here a limitation of the Divine Almightiness? No thinking person imagines, that it is in any way derogatory to the Most High that he cannot effect impossibilities —cannot make a square a triangle, or a triangle a square. These things do not belong to the sphere of power. All that is within its sphere, all the possible (the power*able*), power can effect: it is no limitation of it, that it cannot effect that which is not powerable, that to which it has no relation and on which it cannot be brought to bear. The eye is not weak because it does not hear; the ear is not weak because it does not taste. The necessitation of the will from without is an impossibility, a contradiction, in the very nature of the thing; it is destroyed, it no longer exists, if it be necessitated. No limitation, therefore, of the power of God is involved in the fact that even He cannot necessitate the will; for He himself has so constituted it that it does not admit of being necessitated.

Man is able, in the sense which has been explained, to resist his Maker. Independently of reasoning altogether, the facts of the moral universe bear out this position. Man does, *in fact*, resist, violate, trample upon the will of his Maker; the robber, the murderer, the liar, may be taken as

notorious instances. When one treacherously, furiously, cruelly imbrues his hands in another's life-blood, the created will is in direct, and at the moment successful, resistance to the Uncreated Will. Every act of injustice, of falsehood, of impurity, of cruelty, of treachery, which is perpetrated in the world, is mere and direct resistance to the Divine will, that is, it is resistance to what the Holy One approves, loves, wishes, and expressly commands. If this were in any sense, to any extent, not the case, if the Divine Moral Nature, if Reason, Inclination, Will, in the Most High, were not altogether opposed to any act, either it would cease to be moral evil, or God would cease to be God. All in the universe, which we distinguish as moral evil, has this essential characteristic, that it is mere, and direct, and for the time, successful resistance to the Infinite Will.

Could this characteristic, then, have been wanting or less deeply marked, when, *for the first time*, crime was introduced into the universe? Undeniably it could not. Whensoever that moment was, whatever was the particular act, howsoever it came about, *crime* was perpetrated; that is, an act of the created will was perpetrated, in direct opposition to the Divine will, and in opposition, at the

same time, to Eternal rectitude, purity, truth, or love. A created being, then, introduced into the universe a thing which the Creator abhorred. The constitution of the being was such that it was possible for him to do this, and he did it; and moral evil, that is, the voluntary abuse of moral power, for the first time became a monstrous fact in the universe. The Almighty could, in an instant, have crushed the power which he had conferred, in an instant, have destroyed the guilty being; but moral power continuing (that is, intelligent, moral, voluntary beings existing), he could not, from the very necessity of its nature, have prevented its abuse.

There is something unutterably revolting, in the only other possible supposition on this subject, which we scarcely dare to clothe in words. At the moment when crime was introduced into the universe, the Great Being *might have* prevented it, and he purposely did not prevent it. If the suggestions which we have hazarded *seem* to any to involve, though they really do not, a limitation of Divine *power*, *here*, at least, there is palpably involved, not a limitation, but a direct impeachment of the Divine *Goodness*, and of the *entire Moral Character* of the Infinite One. That which I *can*, but *do* not prevent,

if it lie within my sphere, is as really attributable to me as if it were my positive, personal act. I may as truly be *the cause* of an effect, by *not* doing what I could have done to prevent it, as by actually producing it. Is it insinuated, that although the Great Being might and could have prevented the entrance of evil, yet he was under no obligation to exert his power for this end, but in perfect rectitude suffered the evil to be introduced? Reverently, must that word obligation be connected with the Supreme, by creatures, all whose views are so imperfect and so shortsighted as ours are. But, with profound reverence we may ask, had the minds *he* formed, had his own offspring, no claim to protection from their Almighty Father? Had the transcendent interests of Eternal Rectitude and Truth no claim on the Holy One? Could He suffer these interests to be endangered, to be even permanently injured, while by the exercise of his power they might have been saved? It is impossible! It is impossible! Whatever conjecture on this awful subject we may hazard, this, at least, is to be abhorred. before it can be admitted by any mind, it must be completely forgotten, that the slightest moral evil outweighs an Eternity of prospective good, moral or physical.

Moral evil is only the dishonour, the ruin, the perdition of the universe. *In itself* it is essentially and only dishonour and perdition. It can produce nothing but ruin. The ruin may be modified, may even be turned to the aid of good in other directions. But *itself* is merely ruin, and all that it produces is merely ruin. It must be forgotten, besides, that moral evil, *i. e.* injustice, impurity, falsehood, or whatever other name it takes, is *the* thing which the Holy One abhors, not which he *professes* to abhor, which he is said to abhor, but which he really, and only, and Infinitely abhors. And did *He*, for *any cause, on any ground*, suffer *that* to enter, to which Reason, Conscience, Truth, and Love are eternally opposed? If He only *suffered* the entrance of crime, while he could have and might have prevented it, then is he really, though indirectly, its author, and not this only, but all the moral and physical evil of which that first crime was the inlet and the fountain, must be referred back to Him. No. No. No. The entrance of crime, in other words, the abuse of moral power, in other words, the rebellion of the created will, *must* have been impreventible, else it had been prevented. All that was possible to be done must have been done; but to prevent the abuse of moral

power, that is, to necessitate the created will, was an impossibility.*

But, preventible or inpreventible, at least the Great Being must have *foreseen* the introduction of evil into the universe, and with this distinct foresight he put forth his Creative Power.

There is a wide distinction between foreknowledge and predetermination. A predetermination is the antecedent of an event. A foreknowledge is only a logical consequent of it. Predetermination *creates*, causes the event. Foreknowledge is logically created, caused by the event. An event is certain, just *because* it is predetermined. It *can* be foreknown, only *because* it is certain. The foreknowledge has nothing to do with the production of the event, in any possible way. In the very nature of the thing, the event must first be seen to be certain on wholly independent grounds and only as thus otherwise certain,

* I ought to be ashamed to confess that I have never read the elaborate work of Julius Müller, "Die Christliche Lehre von der Sünde." A very masterly and scholarly criticism of it, which appeared some years ago in the "North British Review," now lies before me. From this, I am disposed to imagine that there is some affinity, in what is here presented, to the views of that distinguished Continental theologian. If this be so, it cannot but be singularly gratifying to me. The coincidence is undesigned, altogether unconscious.

can it be foreknown. The foreknowledge of God does not *make* human actions therefore *certain*, but it is their certainty in themselves which *makes* his foreknowledge *even possible.*

But he must have foreseen the introduction of crime, and yet he gave being to the Universe. *That* is the difficulty and this is the fact, undenied and undeniable by all who believe in the Divine existence and have any consistent conception of the Divine attributes. It bears with no peculiar force on any one view of moral providence that may be taken, but with equal force, on all. Unless we can imagine, that moral evil took the Omniscient by surprise, was an emergency unanticipated by Him and for which He was not prepared—and this is so revolting, so blasphemous, that only the insanity of impiety could entertain it—unless we could imagine this, it is impossible to deny, that the certainty of Moral Evil must have been fully before the eye of the Creator when he put forth his creative energy.

We repeat that Foreknowledge is not predetermination. A Divine *predetermination*, had there been such a thing, would have been the true and proper *cause* of sin, whensoever it became an actual fact in the universe. The Great Being in this case might not himself by his own direct agency *produce* evil,

but, having decreed its existence, exist it must at the appointed time. This is not all, for in determining the end, it is necessarily involved, that he had also determined the means, by which it should be effected. In other words, he had deliberately arranged and planned the course of providence in such a way that crime *must* arise, and that all that mass of moral and physical evils, which have desolated and polluted creation, must come into being. Some of the wisest and best of men have deliberately subscribed to this blasphemy. "If by the author of sin," says President Edwards, "be meant the permitter or not hinderer of sin, and at the same time, *the disposer of a state of events in such a manner*, for wise, holy, and most excellent ends and purposes, that sin (if it be permitted or not hindered) will most certainly and infallibly follow; I say, if this be all that is meant by being the author of sin, I do not deny that God is the author of sin (though I dislike and reject the phrase, as that which by use and custom is apt to carry another sense); it is no reproach for the Most High to be thus the author of sin."*

Limit in conception, *if that must be*, the mere Power, the physical resources of the Great Being,

* "Enquiry into the Freedom of the Will," Part IV. Sec. 9.

but, by all that is venerable and all that is terrible, limit not his Purity, his Sincerity, his Goodness, his Moral Character! With a degree of horror which it is not possible to express, we are constrained to cry out, "Anything rather than this," even downright Fatalism! This has all the inherent enormity of fatalism, with a dash of disingenuousness and meanness, which renders it unutterably detestable. That on the one hand God should Infinitely abhor crime, and that on the other hand crime should nevertheless arise in his universe, that a created Will (as will) should be unconquerable, even by the Supreme; that man should be capable of effectually resisting his Maker, and of causing that to which his Maker is unalterably opposed, is a profound, an inscrutable mystery; but that God should be the author of sin, directly or indirectly, is no mystery, but a foul blasphemy. Moral evil cannot be explained; if it could, it would cease to be what it is. It is altogether an anomaly in the universe. There is no law into which it can be resolved, for it is a violation of all law. It can be accounted for on no principle, for it is in the face of every principle. An interpretation of it—a rational, intelligible interpretation of it—is necessarily impossible, for it is a violent outrage to Con-

science, Reason, Gratitude, and Love. The fact is palpable enough, but the ground of it is far deeper than the reach of our power of vision.

This much only we know, the Great God created natures like to his own, the offspring of a Divine Parentage, endowed them with the highest capacities, and acted upon them by the mightiest influences, but thereafter left it in their own power to determine their course. Impenetrable darkness hangs over the issue of this divine arrangement: the sons of God revolted from their Almighty Father, abused their moral power, and chose evil. Without consent or sufferance of his, in opposition to his nature, his will, and his express command, Infinitely in opposition to him, they chose evil. *He* did not passively suffer it to be so, when he could and might have prevented it; He was not secretly reconciled to it, because of the prospective good to which it might lead; above all, there was no plan of his in which it was a necessary part; on the contrary, the abuse of moral power by creatures in the sight of the Creator was evil, only evil, and the fountain of inconceivable and endless evil which, had it been preventible, *must* have been prevented; He did not wink at it as an indirect, ultimate good, far less take advantage of it in

order to carry forward his own purposes; *He* only hated it, in every view, on every ground, he could only and infinitely hate it. In mere, direct resistance to Him, from the perversion of the human will, crime arose. The first sin—like all sin, whereso-ever, whensoever, howsoever happening—the first sin was Infinitely abhorred by Him. All his love to his own offspring, and all his love to Eternal and Immutable Right and Truth, render it certain that every possible means for its prevention must have been put forth. *He* can be connected with nothing but good, unmixed, highest good; all that He does must be perfectly, purely good, and if evil arise, it can be from no defect in his workmanship, which by any possibility could have been remedied. He can give only a destiny of Good, and that which he forms must in every part be fitted only to secure a destiny of Good, without the omission of any possible thing by which that destiny could be secured. Evil, therefore, whether as foreseen or as seen by the Almighty, can have been foreseen and seen only to be hated, to be resisted by all possible means, to be put down.

The *Eternal* fact did not become a falsehood in Time. From Eternity God's relation to crime, as a conception and a possibility, was summed up in one

word—abhorrence. When it became a reality, his entire relation to it, not less but almost more than before, must have been summed up in one word—abhorrence. At all hazards, and in spite of all that *may seem* to be at variance with them, the Infinite Purity, the Transparent, Perfect Sincerity, and the overflowing Lovingness of the Uncreated One must be upheld; they are fundamental and paramount. Whatever be doubtful, nothing must be admitted for a moment which, even by implication in the remotest possible degree, reflects upon them. We are prepared to sacrifice anything and everything else, to hold anything and everything else as uncertain, but these, in all their integrity, must be preserved without taint, without suspicion.

All Good from God, and nothing but Good from God! All Evil only and wholly from the creature! Whatever be dark, we must maintain that this is light, and sheds its illumination on the course of Divine Providence. That Providence in relation to crime can have had no end but one, the introduction of all possible instrumentalities and influences calculated to prevent it, to diminish its amount, and to retrieve in the highest possible degree its effects.

The diffusive, overflowing, irrepressible, Loving-

ness of God, ever in harmony with Infinite Rectitude, Wisdom, and Truth, the intense, unquenchable, universal Desire of the Divine Mind to produce blessedness, which found vent for itself in creation, has now its appropriate organ in Almighty Providence,—an organ for bringing forth the largest possible amount of good with the smallest possible admixture of evil, and for filling the Universe with pure and permanent glory.

SECTION V.

PHYSICAL EVIL, THE NECESSARY EFFECT, BUT ALSO THE DIVINE CORRECTIVE OF MORAL EVIL.

Crime its own Punishment—Necessarily Physical—Affecting Susceptibilities, Structure, Being of Soul—Not Ordination of God—Physical Evils strictly so called—I. Connection, Mind and Body—Animal Structure—Pain, etc., etc., etc.—II. Hereditary, Representationary Constitution of Human Race—Extension, Propagation of Suffering—Forms, Degrees, Distribution of Physical Evil, of God—Their End, Highest Moral Good—Suffering, Instrument wherewith to destroy Sin.

SIN AND PUNISHMENT.

"WRONG, Crime, is its own punishment;" apart from the agency of the Great Being altogether, it inevitably punishes itself. It is *pain* in the mind; and only when it has succeeded, and so far as it has succeeded, in deadening and depraving the susceptibilities, does it cease to be pain,—that is, physical evil. A bad *passion* (the very word in this application is significant), jealousy, revenge, anger, lust, is a *sensation*, not less than an emotion—a painful sensation in the mind. Moral evil literally wounds and hurts the soul; it is resistance offered to the understanding, the conscience, and the heart, and creates suffering more or less acute. But this is no ordination, no doing of God; it lies in the nature of things. To revolt against right thinking and right feeling is in itself, and owing to the essential constitution of a responsible being, an offence, a wound to the mind —to the conscience especially, the most susceptible and tender part of the spiritual nature, the part also which is most deeply touched. It belongs to this power to accuse, convict, and condemn; and the being who has offended against it suffers in pro-

portion to the amount of his offence, were there none but himself to observe and to judge. He disapproves, perhaps despises, perhaps abhors himself; and self-condemnation, self-contempt, self-abhorrence, are real suffering. Connected with this is the thought, that there is another eye besides ours which looks upon crime, and another authority besides that within our breast, one whose verdict is impartial and unerring.

A mind conscious of crime is the abode and the source of dark fears—well or ill-founded is not here the question. These fears are not owing to any decree or agency of Heaven, but arise from the constitution of moral being; they are not injected or suggested from without, but are altogether reflections and conclusions from within. Remorse on the one hand, and dread of Judgment to come on the other hand, constitute a kind of suffering which is *inevitably* consequent on wrong. In the case of great conscious crime, remorse becomes insupportable. The thought is excruciating, that for what we suffer, or have caused others to suffer, we are alone to blame: that we might have, could have, ought to have obeyed conscience and reason, but would not.

But moral evil not only affects the susceptibilities

and the emotional nature, it touches and injures the very structure of the soul: in any case it involves a derangement of the moral constitution. The law of that constitution, as essential and universal within its sphere as the law of gravitation is in the material universe, must have been overthrown for the time; the moving power of the soul must have acted falsely; the will must have revolted from its ordained, constitutional guides,—Rectitude, Truth, and Love. Moral *life* is entirely grounded in these principles, and entirely dependent upon them. In order to its very being, as a constituted existence, it *must* be in harmony with them. We have already found, that in departing from them, the soul necessarily, to the extent of the departure, loses being, and injures that which forms its very essence.* But this is not a punishment Divinely arranged in order to correct evil; it lies in the nature of things. The slightest departnre from the eternal laws of moral being inevitably affects moral life. The Almighty did not appoint this and could not change it. Sin *in itself is* death. Disease, affecting a vital part of the body, is in itself death begun; unless counteracted, it necessarily extends, and must lead to total death. It may

* See pp. 163-14.

be counteracted; but in itself it is a dying, it is a begun derangement and dissolution of the animal fabric. Moral evil, by a yet more awful internal necessity, is destructive. In itself it *is* perdition,—perdition begun. There is no Moral Pathology by the aid of which we can trace and expose the spread of evil in the soul; but the fact that it spreads is sufficiently, terribly apparent. No disease is so inveterate, so difficult of cure, so all but hopelessly ineradicable, as that which attacks the soul. The first false choice seems to darken the entire inward vision, and to pollute and poison all the fountains of thought and of emotion. In the case of some particular forms of criminal indulgence it is seen at once how essentially *mental* power and *mental* life are thereby impaired. Shocking examples are not wanting, in which the intellect is permanently injured, the moral perceptions hopelessly obscured, the light of Reason and Conscience all but quenched; in which the Mind, the Soul, becomes almost literally dead, and the beings are reduced almost below the level of the brute creation. Significantly, we call them moral wrecks, lost characters, in which perdition is fast accomplishing.

All this, however, is in no respect connected with an actual agency of Heaven; it is no pre-ordination,

but the inevitable nature of things, the necessary working out of moral evil itself; and all that the Most High does in connection with it is to resist, and to put down that which He abhors. But when, in the light of Reason, we have looked upon perdition in this world, the farther question suggests itself, Does that light throw no ray, however feeble, beyond this world? Immortality is a truth of Reason. What of Evil in its relation to Immortality? If even here we behold so much, what shall it be hereafter? In the world beyond the grave shall there be found Perished Minds! Lost Spirits! in which intellect, conscience, soul, have become dead? Immortal wrecks! Fires gone out, that might have glowed with undying brightness! Lights that might have sparkled for ever in the glorious firmament, quenched in the blackness of everlasting night? In all the horror of this conception, and should it ever be realised, at least we are sure that it is no doing of the Holy One, no ordination of his, no punishment which He has appointed, and which his hand inflicts. It lies in the nature of things, and is the proper, necessary working out of crime itself; and crime, with all its tremendous consequences, is that which the Almighty only hates eternally, which He is for ever resisting, and which it is the design of every

department of his Providence, and of the entire plan of Providence, to exterminate.

Physical evil, in other words, suffering, is the *necessary effect* of moral evil, a result, consistent indeed with the will of God, but not owing to it and arising out of independent grounds. But the physical evil, of which we have hitherto spoken, terminates on the mind without affecting the body; and the actual constitution and circumstances of man, therefore, have yet to be investigated. He is a compound being, and the seat of that, which is usually understood by physical evil, is his body. Some of the forms, in which *bodily* suffering comes forth, as the effect of spiritual wrong, are exceedingly striking. In consequence of the mysterious connexion between soul and body, mental emotions, whether joyous or afflictive, virtuous or vicious, exert an acknowledged, a universally understood influence on the animal system. Anger, revenge, jealousy, envy, are not only in themselves and *as passions*, painful, but they create *bodily* disorder and suffering. Even death is often the sudden result of the violence of these emotions. In less extreme cases, they affect the functions of the brain, the heart, the liver, interfere with the circulations and secretions of the body, and produce disease, temporary or permanent.

There are certain crimes, which very visibly and necessarily affect the animal health, impair the constitution, derange and pollute the whole system, lead to decrepitude, premature old age and early death, and transmit their physical effects for many succeeding generations. And this exhibits a new and striking fact in this connection.

The extension of physical evil beyond the moral delinquent himself, is one of the marked features of Providence on our earth, and one, whose verifications are all but universal. The murderer inflicts the greatest of physical evils on a fellow-creature, perhaps on many of his fellow-creatures, and in addition to their death, he wounds and breaks the hearts of their relatives and friends, and injures, perhaps ruins, the worldly prospects of many families. The lust of money has involved millions in all the horrors of slavery, and millions more related to the first, in hopeless grief, in poverty, and wretchedness. The passions of anger, or pride, or ambition plunge nations into all the crimes and sufferings of war. The amount of physical evil caused by this tremendous scourge it is not possible to calculate, or even conceive. The myriads brought to an untimely grave, and the privations, disappointments, and life-long griefs of myriads more, proclaim a reckoning

never to be told. But war cannot be alone. Battle-fields are the sources of pestilence and plague. They pollute the surrounding atmosphere, and disease and death, perhaps numbering far more victims than the sword, are spread far and near. There wants only one grim addition to constitute a monstrous trio. War, Pestilence, and Famine are never far separated. An unnatural demand for the necessaries of life is created, their price is enhanced, at the same time that over great extents of country agriculture has been necessarily neglected, or perhaps its produce wickedly destroyed. The sufferings of the masses of the poor become accumulated, and want, with a fearful increase of disease, stalks through the land.

Such aspects of human affairs,—and they might be unlimitedly extended,—are inexpressibly appalling, but it can hardly fail to strike the least reflecting that they exhibit the agency of man, and not the agency of The Most High. Physical evil, in all the hideous forms that have been described, comes forth manifestly and altogether, from the evil passions of man's heart; and with these God has nothing to do, for he only forbids, condemns, and abhors them. *So far as appears*, there is no Divine agency, no Divine interposition; but the evil will of men only produces its proper effects. The immense proportion

of all the sufferings that afflict the world are *visibly* the work of men themselves, the consequence, directly or indirectly, of their follies, or their crimes, or both. Even the extension of suffering beyond the individual evil doer, *so far as seems*, and so far as *direct* agency is concerned, is attributable to men. *They*, and only they, *directly* bring it about that the innocent are involved in suffering which none but the guilty deserve. Parents are the agents in those sins which yet descend in their effects on their faultless children; and children, again, by their direct agency involve parents in *their* suffering. In the same social relations, in the same civil sphere, in the same locality, individuals of the most opposite character are overtaken by the same calamity. There are thus wide disorder and confusion in the existing condition of the world, a complete blending of evil with good, an almost indiscriminate diffusion of evil on all sides, irrespective of individual character and desert; but the *direct* agency, at least in great part, by which this is brought about is even *seen* to be man's, not God's. It is man, not God, we must charge, if the state of things be such that no judgment can be formed of character from outward position in this world,—if the truly good be often poor, unknown, or heavily afflicted, while those of an opposite

character are outwardly prosperous,—and if, at all events, while some are outwardly prosperous, others, not more undeserving, and in consequence of circumstances over which they have had no control, and which were perhaps originated prior to their existence, be subject to life-long privations and sufferings, to wretchedness and want.

Yet it would be worse than trifling with the most awful subject of human thought to attempt to deny that there is at the same time a positive, a pervading, and a constant *Divine agency* in the *evolution* of the physical evils of the world. In two diretions, chiefly, this is manifest: First, in the structure of the human being; Secondly, in that general constitution under which men, as a distinct order of creatures are placed.

I. It is *altogether owing* to the Supreme Will and ordination, that Man is material as well as spiritual, and that his material nature is such as it is.

That in his composite being, in the fact and the character of his material organisation, and in its connection with his spiritual nature, a large proportion of the sufferings which he endures find their origin, is undeniable. But who ordained, that

evil in the soul should affect the animal health and life? In the nature of the thing itself, there is no reason why a mental passion should produce any change in the matter of the body. It is indeed a mystery that it should,—a mystery inexplicable. Not less mysterious is it that men, through the affections of their minds, should not only injure their own bodies, and be so constituted that they *must* thus injure their own bodies, but that they should also in the same way be able to inflict physical sufferings on others. It is perfectly conceivable, that the passions of the mind might not have reached in their influence beyond the mind, even in the being himself, and that none of the animal functions might have suffered the slightest disturbance. On the other hand, it is perfectly conceivable that beings of a compound nature like men, though capable of *morally* affecting one another, might have had no organs, and no instincts, and no means of *physically* injuring each other. That the fact is otherwise, can be traced only and wholly to the ordination of the Creator. It is his arrangement, his plan with his creatures.

Whilst, then, an immense proportion of the sufferings of our world can be traced to the direct agency of man himself, it is at the same time not to be con-

cealed that he is capable of this sort of agency, simply because the structure of his being is what it is, and of *this* the Almighty is the sole author. All the outward forms in which physical (in the sense of material) evil comes forth, are possible, entirely in consequence of this structure. The frame of the body is a Divine ordination, and the various kinds of pain and evil which reach it, depend upon its frame. All the laws of the animal system and the range of it agency, whether as it respects itself or as it respects other beings, are of Divine appointment. The materials and the mode of its sustenance, its exposure also to manifold evils, that it should be open on so many sides to the assault of disease, that it should be capable of dissolution, and that it should certainly die after a limited period, all are simply owing to the will and power of God. The privations, the sufferings, the wants, and the deaths of human beings, visibly and directly resulting, perhaps, from their own or others' follies or crimes, are yet traceable *in the last instance* to the Almighty, because they arise out of that material organisation and that connexion between the material and the spiritual, which men did not frame for themselves, but which He has established. The last of physical evils, death, and all the countless pains and miseries by which it may be

preceded, have their foundation, virtually, in Divine appointment.

II. It is *altogether owing* to the Supreme will and ordination, that the human race is constituted on what may be called the successional principle, and that the system of our world is a hereditary or representational system.

Men descend from one another, in successive generations, and by the very law of their being are mutually and entirely dependent. They are first receivers and then conveyers of life and of influences, whether good or evil. Each indivdual depends inevitably, to a large extent as it respects the good of this world, and as it respects even moral influences, on his predecessor, his progenitor. Each generation, in like manner, is thus largely and inevitably dependent on that which preceded it. The influence of each individual and of each generation tells for good or for evil, not only upon his or its immediate successor, but upon all the individuals and generations succeeding, to the end of time. This is plain matter-of-fact, interpret it how we will, or leave it uninterpreted. It is no mere theory of theologians, but a solid fact, which none can deny, whatever view of moral providence they may adopt. By the very constitution of things, the

closest association among men and the largest mutual (even moral) dependence are rendered inevitable.

This is the doing of the Creator, *wholly and only* the doing of the Creator. Without consulting with his creatures, without their consent or even knowledge, before their existence, he ordained this hereditary or representational system; and coming into the world, they come, will they or will they not, under this irrevocable law. The human race might have been created at once, and not in successive generations. A system of perfect individualism, instead of one of associated dependence, might have been established. Necessarily, and under any conceivable circumstances, they must have been capable of influencing one another, must have been subject to each other's influence. But there might have been no such inevitable and involuntary dependence as now exists. That, owing to the present system of the world, the moral destiny of a single human being is *necessitated*,—in other words, that a single human being, not through that evil which is wholly and only his own, but *solely* in consequence of this divine constitution is inevitably ruined,—we must utterly deny. To prove such a position is perfectly impossible, and to maintain it is a gratuitous impeachment

of the Merciful Father. As our race is at present constituted, and although external circumstances and even moral influences, to a large extent, are independent of our volition, we hold that there is ample foundation for entire, individual responsibility. Whoever loves and chooses the true and the right, has yielded to the influence of the Great Spirit of Holiness, and whoever sins, knows and feels that he was not compelled to sin, that he could have, and might have, *and ought to have* acted differently. This constitutes his responsibility.

It would be vain, with our limited faculties and sphere of judging, to balance the opposite systems indicated by the words individual and hereditary, and to decide which is the more just, the more favourable to created beings. But it is not difficult to perceive very manifest and vast advantages arising from the intimate relations and dependences of the human race, which could not otherwise have been secured. A large class of affections, otherwise unknown, is hereby originated, affections that form the purest joy and the sweetest solace of life, and which also exert the mightiest influence on the moral principles and character. Thus, too, lessons which could never have been heard, exhibitions of the effect of moral evil which could never have been witnessed,

and warnings, and considerations, and motives without number are brought to bear on human minds. If, on the one hand, there be a fearful amount of evil influence acting on successive generations, arising from the words, the writings, the acts, the character, the entire example of individuals, there is also, on the other hand, an incalculable, a far larger amount of influence for good, which the world had wanted.

It is no irrational depth of humility, in beings such as we are, to be persuaded, that a constitution, which is of Divine appointment, is not less just, and even more favourable to the interests of creatures and to the triumph of virtue, than any other which could possibly have been established. Little able as we are to grasp its entire effects and their numberless ramifications, and with so much advantageous which even we are able to perceive arising from it, it is no extravagant demand on our faith in the Infinite Being, to be called upon to trust that a greater amount of good, on the whole, shall hereby be secured, than could have been secured by any other possible means.

Looking to this constitution of the human race as a whole on the one hand, and on the other to the material organisation of human beings and to the connexion between soul and body, and reflecting that

the *actual* sufferings of men have their origin entirely in these two sources, the conclusion is inevitable, that all the existing forms of physical evil in the world are directly dispensed by the hand of God.

Essentially considered, physical evil is no arrangement, no purpose of his. That it should result from moral evil is not owing to his volition, but arises necessarily in the nature of things. He did not decree it; he could not have prevented it: it is the necessary effect of crime. But what is thus true of suffering, essentially considered, is distinctly not true of the *forms* in which it comes forth. The Almighty undeniably and directly has to do with *them*. Moral evil is altogether and only abomination to Him. He cannot approach it, cannot *permit* it, in any sense, cannot even recognise its existence, except for ever to resist and repel it. But physical evil belongs to an essentially different category. In itself simply, *it* also can be only abhorrent to the merciful nature of the Supreme; but it is not, like moral evil, in all aspects and on all grounds, opposed and only opposed to the Divine Will. On the contrary, as the necessary, retributive effect of the deeper curse, it is wholly consistent with the nature of things; and the Rectitude, the Wisdom, and all the attributes of the Great Being accord with it and pronounce it fitting, as it

is inevitable. Since then Moral Evil *must* inevitably lead to physical evil, since physical evil *must* exist in one form or other and in all its intensity, God shall employ it, so as even to diminish its amount, and, at all events, to put down by means of it the earlier and more ruthless foe of creation. In entire consistency with his nature, he *can* take hold of it; even his holiness, his wisdom, his very love and mercy, demand that he *shall* take hold of it, that he shall directly wield it as an instrument for effecting the grandest and most god-like purpose, — that, indeed, which is the one, all-embracing aim of his agency,—the extirpation of sin.

With grateful and glad appreciation we recognise the *stupendous* fact, that all the forms which suffering assumes in our world, its times, the directions in which it falls, and all its modifications, are the undoubted arrangement of the Almighty. Without a misgiving and with entire conviction, all contrary appearances notwithstanding, that the result *must* be a diminution even of suffering, and certainly a diminution of crime, we see and acknowledge that God has established that constitution of the human race, and that material organisation of human beings, that connexion between soul and body, by means of which

the necessary physical effect of crime is modified endlessly, with a view to the production of beneficent, spiritual results. The uses of suffering here find their interpretation. Views of moral evil, in its manifold shapes and its utter hideousness, are ceaselessly put before the world: impressions of its enormity, not otherwise reached, are created; the fears of men are awakened, at the same time that the most subduing and softening influences are brought to bear upon them; motives of every kind are originated; means of trying, of drawing forth, and of invigorating virtue are employed: altogether a vast, wide-spread, and effective moral machinery is constructed out of the materials which are supplied by the endless modifications of suffering. The grand end of Moral Providence, of the entire agency of the Most High in the affairs of men, receives here its development. That end is properly one, but it assumes a twofold aspect. It is first to correct and retrieve crime, and then to prevent its spread. Combining these two, it is to extirpate crime, as far as that is possible, and to bring forth the largest possible amount of good with the smallest possible admixture of evil.

He, of whose agency in the world we speak, is the Father of Minds. *His* Nature is essentially and

Infinitely Loving, and what is more, to created spirits he stands in a relation ineffably endearing and tender. The wrong which they have atrociously introduced is his abhorrence, but *them* he pities and loves. We have not to think of a Being, who coldly calculates on the principles of wisdom and of exact justice, and cares nothing who may be affected by these calculations, but of One, whose nature is Parental, who is acting for his own offspring; not, therefore, the less wise or the less righteous, but all whose procedure must be entirely consistent with the intensest pity and the tenderest affection. Suffering in itself, as well as sin, must be abhorrent to The All-Merciful. It is not in creating even this —which on the contrary is the *necessary* effect of spiritual wrong—but only in modifying, disposing and dispensing it, that his agency is concerned. But if *his* agency *be* concerned, we have in this fact the very strongest assurance, not only that the sum of suffering must be incalculably diminished, but that, in the highest possible degree, the prime cause of suffering shall itself be reached and effectively assailed.

In the light of the principles which have been advocated, we venture to cast our eye over the moral aspects of the world, over the entire moral

history of man, in all his countless generations, from the beginning till now.

Crimes and sufferings from the two grand classes of difficulties that ask solution at the hands of every inquirer.

With the first we dare not connect The Almighty; the crimes of men are their own; their Creator has no part in them,—in their origin, their forms, their times, or any of their modifications—no relation to them except as an Antagonist. No secret and no open will of his ever recognised them. He never ordained them, and never so arranged it, that they should be perpetrated, but only and always *forbade them, unutterably hated them*, else they had ceased to be crimes. From first to last, He has been doing one thing, and only one thing, in reference to spiritual evil—*putting it down;* this is the foundation of his earthly Providence, the principle on which it is entirely based.

But it is altogether different with the sufferings of the world: The Almighty has a real and direct connexion with them. Physical evil, in itself, is not an ordination of His; it is a necessity, arising from the very nature of moral evil; but with the *forms* which physical evil assumes He has directly to do; they belong, on the one hand, to that hereditary,

representationary constitution under which the human race, by His ordination, is placed, and, on the other hand, to that material organisation which he hath planned and constructed, and that intimate relation between soul and body which He hath established. Out of these two Divine ordinations issue, directly or indirectly, the gigantic calamities of the world, Slavery and War, Famine and Pestilence, all the commoner but incalculable evils, the pains, the griefs, the diseases, the deaths of our race, and all the revolting inequalities and confusions in the outward condition of human beings. It is quite true, that in very great part the results which we witness may be owing to the sufferers themselves; they may also, in still greater part, be traced to the ignorance, the selfishness, the avarice, the cruelty, the folly, the pride, the lust, of their fellow men. But the positive agency of God nevertheless is undeniable.

How can such things, do we ask, happen under the government of a mighty, a wise, a holy and a good Being? In calm earnest, is it not owing to the very fact, of the *government* of a wise and holy and good and mighty God, that such phenomena are not inconceivably more afflictive and terrific? If even *we* look with pity on the condition of our fellow-creatures, He who made them must look on them with Infinite

compassion, and wherever he acts, must act only to alleviate suffering, and to diminish its sum. If, now and again, we can imagine alleviations possible which are not introduced, and evils prevented, which on the contrary are endured, sober reason suggests to us, that it is with the amount of evil, as a whole, that the Great God is dealing, and that the changes of which we think, if temporarily and locally good, would *ultimately* and *over all* be an increase of misery. It is impossible, having his character, in its essential attributes, before our minds, to doubt that that amount is lessened and not augmented by his agency.

The Infinitely Righteous, Wise, Holy and Loving Being is extirpating, by the most effectual methods, that which is the source of *all evil*, the dishonour and the perdition of the Universe. Apparent individual anomalies (which however are not really such), examples of intense suffering, of suffering embracing large multitudes and classes of human beings, must affect and afflict us. They are fitted to deepen our impressions of moral evil, which reveals itself fearfully even in its physical consequences. So far as these consequences can be traced, either to the sufferers themselves, or to the neglect of attainable preventives and correctives, and of cordial and active

sympathy, in those who might have saved, or could have aided the sufferers, there is cause for the severest reprehension, but no cause for reproaching or suspecting either the essential character or the merciful providence of the Divine Being. The solemn conclusion at which we have already arrived is none the less sure and unassailable—that Moral evil on earth is the work of man alone, to which the Creator ever was, is, and ever must be Infinitely opposed—that Physical evil in itself is the *necessary* effect of Moral evil, which even God could not have prevented—and that His connexion even with this consists solely in modifying the forms in which it comes forth, in diminishing its sum total, and in directing it to the production of the highest good.

With all the woes and all the crimes of our race before our eyes, humbled, grieved, and condemned by the spectacle, we can yet look above to the resplendent sunlight of the Infinite Nature, and believe, with absolute confidence, that not a pang, not a groan, not a tear, not a sigh, has place in our world, which could have been spared, *on any ground of rectitude, wisdom, or love.*

The All Mighty Father of Minds is reigning; amidst the crimes, the confusions, and the sufferings of this world He is pursuing a Divine Plan; putting

down, first moral, and then physical evil; modifying, distributing, allotting, physical evil, in order to put down moral evil; retrieving and correcting that wilful abuse of liberty, which is the original and the sole fountain of all that degrades, afflicts, and pollutes creation; bringing back the soul of man to its rightful guides, Conscience and Reason, to those laws which alone *ought* to govern intelligent moral beings, which indeed (in the necessity of the nature of things) *must* govern, if creation is to be a harmony; restoring and realising the original Divine Idea of the universe, as a reign of Righteousness, Truth, and Love; exhibiting Creation as a Family and a Home,—The Everlasting One with the Many around him, each a glorious a spotless reflection of the Source of Being.

CHAPTER II.

PHYSICAL AND MORAL EVIL IN THE BRIGHTER LIGHT OF REVELATION.

IN THREE SECTIONS.

SECTION I. EVIL IN THE UNIVERSE AND ITS ENTRANCE AMONG MEN.

SECTION II. THE COURSE OF EVIL ON OUR EARTH, AND THE SUCCESSIVE INFLUENCES DIRECTED AGAINST IT.

SECTION III. THE DESTINY OF THE MORAL UNIVERSE.

WRITTEN REVELATION.

We now pass from the speculative to the positive ground, a sphere less exciting to the intellect and less susceptible of philosophical treatment, but more exact and more satifactory to humble faith. Instead of general reasonings, our appeal must be to sober facts, recorded in the Hebrew and the Christian Scriptures, and to defined principles issuing from that Supreme Wisdom, which mercifully communicated itself to the world, through various organs, in different ages.

The first fact which meets us in this new sphere is, that man, in his immortal and moral relations, is no longer the only object of investigation. We are ushered into the presence of a new form of rational and responsible being. It is impossible to read the books of the Old and New Testament without distinctly perceiving, that they assert the existence of another and a higher race of intelligences than man. If the authority of these books be admitted, no possible scheme of fair interpretation can set aside this fact. Whether that authority be admitted or not, and whether what these books assert be credited or not, it is certain that they contain this doctrine.

And, in itself, it is difficult to see what valid objection can be urged against it. It is indeed rather probable than otherwise, a thing which we might rationally have entertained as a conjecture, even had there been no hint of it from any quarter. It is elevating and quickening: it exalts our conceptions of the Supreme, and of the opulence and glory of the universe. On no principle of sound philosophy can we conceive it assailed. In the nature of the thing, it is not impossible or even unlikely. It is not inconsistent with the rectitude, the wisdom, the power, or the love of the Creator. It is, in every way, more inspiring and glorious to imagine that man, instead of being the only actual form of responsible existence, belongs to a vaster brotherhood, the countless brotherhood of minds, that he is only a younger branch of the great family, and that there are elder sons of creation, the first-born children of the Highest. And this, we hold to be the distinct testimony of written Revelation. With those who reject its authority we are not here dealing, except indeed that, throughout, our aim is to show that the discoveries of Revelation are in harmony with the highest Reason, and with the soundest philosophy, and that they contain and reflect a light, which un-

aided Reason and human Philosophy are incapable of shedding.

But the dark mystery is this, that while Revelation announces the existence of a higher order of intelligent beings than men, it announces, at the same time, the introduction of moral, and, of course, physical evil among them also; a portion of the Angelic order is fallen, polluted, and miserable.

How shall *this* be explained? Does Revelation throw any light on this dark fact, which it announces, connecting it in any manner with Human Sin? But it must be upon our world chiefly that the light of revelation falls; does it then unfold, and to what extent, the course of evil *here?* Does it exhibit the successive influences by which the Great Being has been correcting and retrieving it? Last of all—does Revelation foretel the issue of the conflict between good and evil? Does it picture a consummation, and describe the final destiny of the moral universe?

Our inquiry here, therefore, will be separated into three Sections, viz.—

FIRST.—Evil in the Universe, and its entrance among men.

SECOND.—The Course of Evil on our earth, and the Successive Influences directed against it.

THIRD.—The Destiny of the Moral Universe.

SECTION FIRST.

EVIL IN THE UNIVERSE, AND ITS ENTRANCE AMONG MEN.

TWO ORDERS OF INTELLIGENT MORAL BEING—I. ANGELS—SPIRITS—ABSENCE OF EXTERNAL TEMPTATION—PROBATION, RESPONSIBILITY—FIRST SIN, AMBITION—AGGRAVATIONS—CREATOR WHOLLY APART FROM IT—ALL HIS AGENCY OPPOSED TO IT—II. MAN—REASON, CONSCIENCE, WILL—COMPOUND BEING—STRUCTURE, GUARDED—EXTERNAL TEMPTATION—PROTECTION AGAINST INTERNAL NOT POSSIBLE—LESSER PROTECTION NEEDLESS—TEMPTATION NOT CAUSE OF SIN—EXPOSES WHAT WITHIN—HUMAN SIN REMEDIABLE—CREATOR NO PART IN IT—OPPOSING IT.

FIRST SIN OF UNIVERSE.

THE original fountain of crime is not in the nature of man, but in the nature of angels. And the fact of its introduction among this order of creatures is a strong confirmation of the conclusion, at which we have already arrived, namely, that moral evil, not owing to the slightest limitation of Infinite Power or Mercy, but in its own nature and from the essential constitution of created intelligence, is *inpreventible.*

There are two forms of created Moral Being, and only two, so far as we have means of ascertaining—Angels and Men; the one occupying the highest, and the other the lowest place in the scale of responsible existence. Both have fallen,—moral evil has found an entrance among both. Had it been possible to prevent this issue, it is inconceivable that it was not prevented in the one case or the other, if not in both. A decree of Heaven, inevitably fixing the same dreadful result in the two cases, we have already attempted to prove, is a baseless invention, a calumny against the Holy One, so atrocious and so foul, that it ought not to be once named. The natural and rational inference from the fact, that moral evil was realised in both of the two existing

orders of created intelligence, is, that it must also certainly have been realised in any other possible order of created intelligence. Angels and men cannot be looked upon as exceptions: they are examples of moral being, and what happened to them must certainly have happened to any other order, to all possible orders, of creatures. To imagine anything peculiar in them leading to a peculiar result, is to affix a suspicion, as impious as it is groundless, to the character of The Almighty. Created intelligence is *necesarily* fallible. It has, in fact, fallen.

1. The Probation of Angels.

The materials are exceedingly limited, on which to found an interpretation of the first introduction of crime into the universe. One thing, in any case, we cannot choose but maintain, without abatement or modification of any kind, — the essential nature of moral evil. *That* must be the same, whatever the circumstances be in which it shall arise, and among whatever order of creatures. *It* is always the abuse of moral power, a purely voluntary act of the creature, and always wholly in opposition to Conscience and Reason, and to the will and the entire nature of the Creator. If it be *in*preventible, this arises from no

defect of power in the Almighty, but because physical power of whatever amount has no possible application to the case. Will, in its very nature,* cannot be necessitated (for then it would cease to be will): in other words, the prevention of its abuse is impossible. It may be destroyed, but continuing to be what it is, it cannot be necessitated.

The abuse of moral power by some of the angelic race is distinctly announced in the inspired books, but the circumstances in which it occurred are not revealed. One or two facts of their condition, however, are communicated, which may here be brought into connexion with their apostasy. The constitution, under which they were placed as a race, was one of complete, individual independence and responsibility. Nothing of the hereditary, associated, representationary system, which is found among human beings, existed among them. Instead of successive contributions to their original number, we are led to conceive that the existence of all was simultaneous; and on the other hand, and by this very fact, each was in a high degree independent of all the rest. They must indeed have been capable of being influenced by one another; and in point of fact, it is

* See pp. 114—160.

not to be doubted, that the example of some, and their efforts to seduce, acted with the most fatal success on others. But their constitution as a race was one of perfect individuality. Each was essentially independent and left to stand or fall by himself.

It would be presumptuous, with our limited means of judging, to make a positive assertion respecting the special direction in which the virtue of angels first gave way, nor is it of high importance to be able to decide. There is a kind of traditional faith on the subject, generally accepted in the Christian Church, which is somewhat countenanced by the little that appears in the sacred writings. It is to the effect, that the original crime of the universe was ambition. But how this, or indeed any other form of evil, first gained a footing among the angelic order, whether one became corrupt and contaminated the others, or whether multitudes became possessed with the same thought at the same moment, how the incipient movement of crime arose, by what process, and through what stages it advanced till it reached its mature development, it would be vain to speculate. This much may be hazarded, without fear of contradiction, that whether we look to the peculiar constitution under which angels were placed, or still

more to their nature and condition, the remotest possibility of moral evil would seem to have been precluded. They were pure spirits, allied most nearly to the Great Spirit, the Creator. We are led to conceive of them, besides, as the highest form possible of created intelligence. Intellect, Conscience, Affection, in them found the highest development, though necessarily limited. Their moral nature also was not only fully endowed but perfectly pure, without the remotest taint of pollution, without the faintest lurking tendency to evil. It was besides involved in their condition and their nature, that they were absolutely exempted from the possibility of external temptation. On the one hand, in their purely spiritual being, they were beyond the reach of the influences of matter. On the other hand, they were alone in the creation, the only created intelligences existing, and they were all holy. External temptation was literally impossible. There was no quarter from which it could arise. They were infallibly secure on all sides, except from within. Should moral evil ever have place amongst them it could only be of their own originating, entirely the effect of the mere native choice of their own wills, unprompted, unsolicited, perfectly spontaneous.

Amidst the conditions that have been named, all full of the highest promise, and fitted to secure the most triumphant result, the Trial of Created Being was made for the first time in the history of the Universe. Probation is only one aspect of Responsibility. It is not so much any special act of The Supreme, as a necessity in the nature of an intelligent moral being. Such a being is necessarily proved, for he is necessarily responsible. It belongs to the possession of a conscience, it finds its higher meaning in the doctrine of the Infinite, and it is fully developed when to this doctrine is added that of a future, immortal life. What beings endowed like angels *are*, and what they *do*, can at no moment ever be indifferent. There is a supreme authority, to whom they are under deep and immovable obligations, to whom they are ever accountable. Their state is necessarily and ceaselessly a state of probation. No expressed purpose or act of The Creator to this effect is required, for the thing is involved in the nature of the beings themselves, and in the relation in which they stand to the Eternal Guardian of Righteousness and Truth. He who formed them takes, and cannot but take, account of them, and knows and marks whether

they be faithful or unfaithful to the laws of their being, to the Immutable principles of Right.

The result of the first great Trial of Moral Being in the Universe must for ever abide an overwhelming mystery. Some of the Angelic order fell from their integrity, abused their moral power, voluntarily separated themselves from Eternal Truth and Right, and therefore from the God of both, voluntarily chose evil. We must ask no cause for this; it *had* no rational cause. It was not an intelligible effect of circumstances (for then it had not been crime), but an illegal and monstrous abuse of causative power. It was not according to any law, but, in its very essence, was contrary to all law—a confounding and inexplicable anomaly. We must seek no ground, no reason, for moral evil, because moral evil is essentially and only Unreason. The created will sets at defiance Conscience, and Reason, and Law, and Love, and even The Creator himself, the Being who formed it, and who also could in an instant destroy, as he formed it.*

The entrance of crime into God's universe, under any conceivable conditions, is awful, but crime in Angelic beings has some features of atrocity peculiar to itself. The dignity and the strength of their

* See pp. 209–10.

natures, their place in the scale of creation, and their vast spiritual endowments, deepen our wonder at their fall, but they also invest it with an extraordinary guiltiness. And then the absence of all external temptation imparts to it a character of pure gratuitousness, a native, inherent malignity, which we can conceive nothing beyond.

Whall we, then, hesitate to pronounce what that evil must have been in the Divine sight, which is in itself so inexpressibly malignant, and is fraught with such ruin to rational beings? We need entertain no fear of speaking too freely, too loudly, on this subject. That first crime of the Universe was wholly repugnant to the Holiness, the Wisdom, the Will, of the Great Being; had it indeed not been so, it had not been crime. His only aspect towards it can have been unutterable abhorrence. No secret inclination of his favoured it. No judgment of his, founded on its prospective consequences, accorded with it. No permission of his was extended to it. He only forbade it, only hated it, only acted against it—only thought, and felt, and acted in such a way as to prevent, resist, retrieve, and destroy it. The strength and perfection of Angelic intellect, the pure spirituality of the Angelic nature, and the absolute exemption of the Angelic order from the possibility of

external temptation, were so many bulwarks, we might have predicted, impregnable bulwarks against moral evil. If it was introduced, nevertheless, if angels fell, the fact must remain for ever a dark and unfathomable mystery. But at least the Creator stands wholly apart from it, and opposed to it. There remains to us, untouched and untainted, His immaculate Purity, His Suspicionless Love. These are the last Stronghold and Hope of the Moral Universe! That stronghold abides amidst the crimes and the woes of Angels or of Men.

2. Probation of Man.

On a new theatre, and in circumstances strikingly altered, the trial of Created Being was again conducted. Conscience, Reason, Volition, the essential conditions of Responsibility, were not wanting here. They could not be wanting. If we suppose, as perhaps we are justified in supposing, a lower scale and a narrower range of intelligence, and therefore also more limited moral perceptions and convictions, yet withal, the Human Nature was as strong, within its sphere, as the Angelic Nature, and not less securely guarded against the possibility of moral evil. To distinguish between truth and error, right and wrong, belonged to man as to angels. His

nature besides, like theirs, was pure and untainted, without inclination or bias, in any one of its constituent parts, in the remotest possible degree, to evil.

There were two opposite principles, and only two, so far as we are capable of judging, on which intelligent beings might be constituted. Either the entire race might be created at once, or it might propagate itself in successive generations. Either all might, at the same time, in the same circumstances, be left to voluntary self-development, or the successive generations might, in the fact of their succession, be dependent in measure the one on the other, as well in their outward circumstances as for moral influences. The one we may call the individual, and the other the hereditary principle; the one the independent, and the other the dependent, associated, representationary principle.

In the case of angels, we found the first of these established. In the case of men, the second was adopted. A few hints have already been thrown out on the peculiarities of a constitution thus based. Its effect, as a restraining if not an impelling force, is a fact of every day observation and experience. The parent cannot easily divest himself of the thought that his character must affect his child for evil or for good. Relations, friends, even members of civil

society, in their intercourse with one another, are conscious of an amount of influence arising from the same cause. If we go back in conception to the great progenitor of humanity, the effect of this principle is not to be estimated. In a single sentence, we venture to suggest only this,—To a holy being, it must have appealed with overwhelming force, that *his* choice would inevitably affect deeply the generations of his race to the end of time. With all the aid derived from this new and peculiar motive, the first probation of Humanity was conducted.

It has already been suggested, that there is some ground to imagine that the original crime of the universe was ambition. We cannot err in concluding that it could not be fortuitously, but must have been with wise and merciful intention, that in the case of man an express provision was made in the very structure of his being against this evil. This new creature was spiritual, but he was material also. In one part of his nature, man was brought down to the level of the brute earth on which he walked, and in his very composition was furnished with a perpetual check to ambition and a perpetual motive to humility.

In one other point, the conditions of Human and of Angelic Probation were impressively distinguished. Man was *not* exempted from external temptation.

The inspired history conveys the distinct intimation that it was by influence from without that his virtue was assailed and vanquished.

"Could not the Almighty have hindered the tempter from gaining access to his victim? Could *he* not have prevented the temptation from being put before man?"

There can be only one consistent reply to such questioning. So far as mere physical resources are concerned, the Almighty could, not at one moment only, but at any moment, and through the whole course of man's after existence, have prevented external temptation. But virtue, which had thus been placed within a perpetual shelter, and been the result not of man's choice, but of God's Omnipotence, had been utterly worthless, had been no virtue all. Nor can it be forgotten, that, in the earlier history of the moral universe, the assault, which had proved so disastrous to created integrity, had come not from without but from within; and against this, the highest source of danger, there neither was nor could be any possible protection. Protection from the lesser danger, had it been ever so complete, could have availed nothing when the greater danger, in all its force, must necessarily have been ever present.

We ought not to allow ourselves to be troubled,

even for a moment, by a difficulty which is in great part superficial, and is at least far more apparent than real. In the condition of human nature, as it is constituted on our earth, men inevitably influence one another. Their acts of evil, their writings, their words, their very looks, may and do often convey temptation. There is not a human being who is not solicited to evil, every day of his life. The position of the Head of the human race, as it is described in the sacred history, was in this respect even freer from peril than that of any of his descendants. Nor does it essentially affect the question that in his case the tempter is represented as an angelic, and not a human, being. Temptation, whencesoever arising, must consist in the presentation of thoughts to the mind or of incitements to the appetites and passions. Nothing can be plainer than that the opportunities and the powers of an unembodied spirit, for this kind of agency, must be in every way more limited than those of a being, whose structure is the same with our own, and whose association with us is intimate and constant.

But it is even more necessary to bear in mind that external temptation, of *itself*, *is* nothing and effects nothing. It has the power, which we ourselves give to it, but no more. It is indeed trial, something to

be borne, something which proves and exposes what is within us, but it *puts* nothing there, it can only bring out what is already within. Temptation is not compulsion; no amount of temptation can constitute a compulsion; did it do so, it would be no crime to yield to it. But there is power to resist, ever there must be power to resist, else there is no probation, and there can be no crime. Moral evil is the abuse of moral power, nothing else. Probation necessarily supposes temptation, that is, it supposes trial of one kind or other, and of what kind does not essentially affect the question. Probation means that the being is to evince in some way what is within him, is to be brought to some test, in order to manifest how he will determine for himself, whether he will legitimately exert his power of choice, or will misuse that power and choose unwisely and wickedly. Temptation, from whatever quarter addressed to him, is but a *presentation* to his mind, nothing more. Whether he will welcome or dismiss what is *presented* to him is to be seen, but it depends on himself alone. All the power he *can* have, he *has*, in the constitution of his nature. That power is in no degree weakened, or even in the least affected, by the presence of temptation. Temptation cannot alter our power, it can

only reveal our use of it; in no way can it *cause* evil in us, it can only show whether we be such that we *will* do evil.

At the same time, the fact is memorable and impressive, that man was assailed by a fellow creature, and that this assault from without was the occasion, though not the cause of his crime and fall. It is a teaching on two sides; as to the nature of fallen spirits, and as to the destiny of man. On the one hand, moral evil in angels is shown to be in its working what we had judged it to be in its origin, marked by a peculiar and desperate malignity. On the other hand, we can hardly fail to feel, that there was not the same unmitigated blackness, the same atrocity of character, the same mere native viciousness of will in human crime, as in the crime of angels. The presence of external temptation is a marked peculiarity, which to all human conception takes from the darkness and depth of the fall, in itself considered.

But crime in our world, however justly it may thus be distinguished in some points from crime in angels, can have been only abhorrent to The Holy One. The wilful abuse of moral power by man, his abandonment of the Eternal law of Conscience and Reason, his choice of evil, that is, of dishonour and

perdition, was an unmitigated abomination in the sight of heaven. In the constitution under which God had placed man, in the very structure of his being, in the new and peculiar nature with which He had endowed him, in all His agency, and in every aspect of it, *He* had shown that such an issue could be only and unutterably hateful to him. If this second Probation of Created Being terminated, like the first, in the entrance of moral evil, at least The Great Being stands wholly apart from it, and wholly opposed to it. No breath must dim the Immaculate Purity, the Suspicionless Love of the Creator. These are the last Stronghold and Hope of The Moral Universe. That stronghold abides amidst the temptations, apostacies, and deaths of this lower world.

SECTION SECOND.

THE COURSE OF EVIL ON OUR EARTH AND THE SUCCESSIVE INFLUENCES DIRECTED AGAINST IT.

IN FOUR EPOCHS.

FIRST EPOCH. DIVINE BENIGNITY.
SECOND EPOCH. JUDGMENT.
THIRD EPOCH. THE EXCEPTIONAL, ELECTIVE SYSTEM.
FOURTH EPOCH. THE MYSTERY OF ALL TIME.

EARTHLY PROVIDENCE.

We have now to do with Man alone. Human sin is remediable; by Almighty Mercy it has been remedied. He who was unutterably opposed to its introduction has engaged in a protracted warfare, the aim of which is the correction and extirpation of that only thing in the Universe which he hates. Providence is the outspread plan of The Most High for putting down sin; it is the succession of Divine Methods, of acting upon the World, of saving and regenerating that power, in whose voluntary abuse alone, evil originated, of redeeming and bringing back undutiful and rebellious children to the feet of their Father in contrition and in faith, and of attaching them for ever to his character and his throne.

The course of The Divine Providence in our world, Revelation helps us to distinguish into Four distinct Epochs, which exhibit the separate and successive methods which The Supreme has adopted, in his great controversy with human sin.

FIRST EPOCH.

DIVINE BENIGNITY—LONGEVITY OF THE EARLY RACES OF MEN—"GOD WILLETH NOT THAT ANY SHOULD PERISH"—FOR 1500 YEARS, THIS INFLUENCE BROUGHT TO BEAR ON MANKIND.

THE marked feature in the Divine discipline of the world, throughout its entire course, has been mercifulness. From the moment when words of grace were deposited within the first announced penalty, till Love was incarnated in the person of Jesus Christ, and from that period till now, The Most High has dealt with man, not on the principle of exact justice, but on the principle of undeserved, unsolicited, Almighty mercy. The manifest intention of the Infinite Being has been, not to overwhelm his creatures by righteous retribution, but to win back their affections by unmerited kindness; not to crush them with his avenging arm, but to break the world's heart by tenderness and compassion, and to bring down upon it the insupportable pressure of an Infinite Grace.

This large and universal benignity, peculiar to no age, but common to all ages alike, is not now before

us, but only a special and singular manifestation of the Divine compassion, which belonged exclusively to the early annals of our earth.

The longevity of the first races of mankind is plainly asserted in the sacred writings. With the bearings of this fact as a question of physiology or ethnology, with its evidences on independent grounds, or with its difficulties, we meddle not. As a fact resting on the authority of the Hebrew Scriptures, we take it up here; and it is of importance to us, chiefly when viewed in connexion with the foregoing history of the temptation and the apostacy. In the representation which is given of these dark events, and among the conditions of man's trial, this forewarning is inserted: "In the day thou eatest of the fruit of the tree thou shalt surely die."

Moral evil *is* death. We have sought to show* that this is no Divine ordination, which owes its force simply to the supreme will, but that it lies in the nature of things, and is a necessity in itself. It could not be otherwise. Moral evil *is* death begun in the soul, a positive loss of being,† disorder, derangement, perdition. The Eternal fact was and *must have been* realised in man, the instant

* See pp. 218–19. † See pp. 163–4.

that he abused his moral power. But there was a *positive* arrangement of the Holy One superadded to the *moral necessity*, and inner, spiritual death was ordained to be connected with an outer physical dissolution. He who abhorred moral evil, so constituted man as to furnish him with a visible image of the fearful destiny, for which that evil was preparing his soul. Physical Death is one of the divine instruments for retrieving moral death, for effecting a moral resurrection, and for regenerating and restoring moral life. In itself, withal, it is an impressive symbol of the Divine Idea of crime.

Physical as well as moral death was contained in the original forewarning, "In the day thou eatest, thou shalt surely die." But it was not inflicted; the infliction was long, very long, withheld, and not till it could no longer be withheld, was it suffered to fall down on the guilty. It had been strictly righteous, if the condemnatory sentence had immediately taken effect in all its physical meaning, as well as in all its moral force, the instant that crime was perpetrated. It had been more than righteous, it had been merciful, to have delayed the execution of the sentence for a year, and yet more for a succession of years. But the life of the antediluvian patriarchs was preternaturally, at all events, un-

usually extended. We are not careful to uphold the perfect exactness of the record, as to the length of antediluvian life; but it was unusually extended; that is enough; and there are independent considerations in abundance to satisfy any reasonable enquirer that this must have been the case. The meaning of such a peculiar economy it is impossible to mistake. To the men of that age, it ought to have spoken as impressively as if a preternatural hand had traced in letters of light, on the firmament over their heads, this heavenly gospel, "The Lord is long-suffering, and full of compassion; He willeth not that any should perish, but that all should turn to Him and live." These men must have seen, that the Most High was reluctant to inflict merited retribution. They must have seen and felt, that He had even adopted this gracious method of touching their hearts and restoring them to himself, to duty, and to life.

For more than fifteen hundred years, this arrangement of singular mercy, this subduing and mighty influence, was brought to bear on the world. We cannot doubt that multitudes understood and felt its power, and bethought them of the Living and Loving One. But the condition of the earth as a whole, the prevailing character of human society,

was inexpressibly dark at the close of the first epoch. An unerring authority declares that "All flesh had corrupted their ways;" "The imagination of the thoughts of man's heart was evil, only evil, continually." The earth was filled with violence, and blood, and crime. But the fact was *only and utterly* an offence to the Almighty. The maturity of moral evil could not be less abhorrent to him, than its first appearance. Its wide ramifications and its more atrocious developments could not be less at variance with his will, than its incipient form. All his agency, like all his nature, as they had been from the first, now especially *must* have been only directed against it. We behold Him adopting the most wonderful, the most subduing, and the best adapted, methods for putting it down; even unveiling a new attribute of his own nature for this purpose. For the first time in the history of the universe, Divine mercy was revealed. It had been known from the beginning that God was Love, but it had never yet been seen that He was Mercy. To the unfallen and the holy of his rational offspring He had exhibited infinite tenderness; but that He could forgive the fallen, till now had never been made manifest. It *was* made manifest now, and for the putting down of sin the Almighty laid open the sacred depths of his own

Being. In these circumstances, if that mighty mystery, as horrible as it is mighty, a rebellious created Will, continued nevertheless to draw around it only thicker darkness,—if moral evil developed itself ever in new forms, and spread itself ever wider and wider,—and if the degeneracy of man deepened and darkened,—at least The Creator stood wholly apart from it, and opposed to it. Blessed, Blessed Being! All Light is with Thee! Only Light is with Thee! All darkness is from the Creature!

SECOND EPOCH.

JUDGMENT—DELUGE—GEOLOGICAL AND MORAL DIFFICULTIES—MERCY MINGLED WITH JUDGMENT—FEARS OF WORLD ADDRESSED—"FLEE FROM WRATH TO COME."

THE Doctrine of a Deluge, dating somewhat above four thousand years ago, stands connected with the discoveries and conclusions of the Science of Geology. It is not to be concealed that that doctrine, as it was earlier understood, as it is even yet generally understood, is opposed at least to the *conclusions* of Science. Geologists, with scarce an exception, have decided that anything like a general, and still more a universal, submersion of the world by water, at the date supposed, is not to be believed. There is not only no evidence of such a thing, but there is, it is alledged, very sufficient proof to the contrary. But scientific men, who have at the same time bowed to the authority of revelation, find no difficulty in reconciling the statements of Scripture with Geological inductions. A deluge, partial as compared with the whole surface of the earth, is not inconsistent with observed facts, but rather favoured by them.

Only a part of the globe, in these early ages, was inhabited, and within this part all the human population, as well as the lower forms of animal life, were congregated. A submersion of this part was, in fact, a general, a universal deluge. It was a sudden and universal destruction of human and animal life on the earth. View how we will the question as to the number of the earth's inhabitants at that time, suppose the human population indefinitely smaller than it is now, the judgment was terrific; the mind recoils with horror from the idea of an immense mass of life and of intelligence—an entire race of beings —in a moment swept into eternity.

It is criminal and vain for men to constitute themselves judges of the acts of the Great Being, as if *they* could penetrate into all their grounds, could trace out all their ramifications, and could estimate all their effects. But in our feebleness and short-sightedness, there are some things here which we may be able to understand. The Father of Minds, must ever have contemplated not any single generation, for example, not that single generation alone, on which a fate so awful descended, but all the countless generations of men to the end of time. His rectitude, his wisdom, his power, and his love consulted, indeed, for each individual—but for each

individual in his connexion with the great whole. Without defect of justice or of kindness even to one, God must ever have consulted for the greatest good of the greatest number. Mere forbearance, mere love to one, himself only considered, might have proved the deepest injury to multitudes; mere forbearance, mere love to a single generation, itself only considered, might have proved the deepest injury to countless generations to come.

This idea fixed in our minds, we have then to recall one of the leading principles on which the Infinitely wise, from the first, conducted his Agency among men. It is this:—to connect physical with moral evil; or rather, since physical evil, not by a Divine ordination, but in itself, necessarily, is the result of moral evil; it is to arrange and distribute the *forms* of physical evil, so as most efficiently to act upon moral evil for its correction and extinction. For example, it was determined to exhibit, in the death of the body, a type of the ruin of the soul; by the outward, to inflict the penalty, and yet also to provide the antidote for inward evil. Death and all the outward evils of the world, their distribution, their times, their forms, the numbers and the particular individuals on whom they fall, are ordained instruments for putting down crime. In this view

physical death, whether of one or of many, presents to us no difficulty in connexion with the Supreme Providence. It must, indeed, ever be appalling, and the greater the number whom it overtakes at one time, and the suddenness of its infliction, and the more revolting its form, so much the more appalling must it be. But it presents no difficulty.

The moral condition of the world, at the time of the deluge, has already been described. It was a condition of deep and wide-spread degeneracy. In spite of all the influence of that singular mercy of Heaven, which for fifteen hundred years had been continued, and although in that period innumerable triumphs had been won, it was a condition of deep and wide-spread degeneracy. This being the case, it may occur, even to the least reflecting, that if, descending from a pure origin, men had thus degenerated, and sin had spread its ravages so wide and far, the result must have been beyond conception terrible, if the world that then was had been suffered to perpetuate and propagate itself. But this was not suffered. In infinite wisdom, and, still more markedly, in infinite love, it was not suffered. Suddenly, and even awfully, the fountain was stopped, from which the polluted stream of human life issued, and from a new source, and that comparatively pure, the

future generations of men were caused to spring forth. The universal deluge which followed, as we have seen—a distinguished and extended act of Divine Mercy—lowers as a huge, dark cloud over the early history of the world. But while we gaze upon it thoughtfully, there shoot out from it, ever and again, gleams of light withal, and within it we can believe that there glows the pure, living brilliance of uncreated Love. Yet the deluge was emphatically an act of judgment. In its first and prominent aspect, it was an appalling judgment, and without question it was designed to influence the fears, as before The Highest had influenced the affections and the hopes of men. This act of Divine judgment, like a lofty and massive column, which all the world thereafter might see, rises up at the commencement of the second epoch of human history; and upon it was written the warning, in letters which all the world might read, "Flee from wrath to come."

It is yet more striking, that the impression produced by this mighty warning was deepened by a minor and subsidiary economy, and human life, which had heretofore been measured by centuries, was now contracted to nearly its present limits. Men looked around upon their race, and beheld them falling fast and thick, as the ears of corn before the reaper's

sickle. It was as if in all directions, now to one and again to another, the secret and irresistible summons were conveyed, "Come to judgment," "Prepare to meet thy God." The deluge, at the commencement of the epoch, with a loud and terrific voice, cried to men, "Flee from wrath to come," "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God." Onward through the whole course of that epoch this voice was re-echoed, in lower but hardly less emphatic tones, by each death that closed a now shortened life: "Flee from wrath to come:" "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God."

For more than a thousand years, succeeding the first period of upwards of fifteen hundred years, the influence of this salutary fear was the chief power brought to bear upon the heart of the world. That it was effective, and that multitudes were through it awakened, regenerated, and saved, we *must* believe. But the root of evil was not destroyed, but continued still fearfully vigorous. The curse in the heart of the world was not extirpated: "The Lord looked down from heaven upon the children of men. Behold they are all gone out of the way; they are together become unprofitable. There is none that understandeth and seeketh after God." In such cir-

cumstances, shall we hesitate for a moment to believe that the aspect of The Eternal towards this renewed proof of the inveteracy, the indestructibility of moral evil, was, as it had been from the first, one of infinite abhorrence. If the result of all the discipline of Providence was such as we have seen, this at least is certain, it was not *because*, but *in the face* of all that The Most High had done.

THIRD EPOCH.

EXCEPTIONAL, ELECTIVE SYSTEM—JEWISH DISPENSATION—ITS ORIGIN, *Love to World*—NO PARTIALITY, FAVOURITISM—EXPEDIENT FOR PRESERVING TRUTH *for World*—EFFECTIVE—DARKNESS, EVIL, WIDE-SPREAD—CREATOR APART FROM RESULT.

FROM the beginning, the moral economy of the world had been universal and indiscriminate. During the first epoch of more than fifteen hundred years, and during the second epoch of more than a thousand years, there had been no distinction of individual, nation, or class. The original revelation, announced immediately on the introduction of sin and formally renewed after the deluge, was given to man, to universal man; it was for all nations and all times. The ampler and brighter communications, given at the coming of Christ, which have survived already nearly two thousand years, it is not doubted, are, in like manner, unconditional, indiscriminate and universal. There has been only one, not extended, interval, which has stood out an exception to all the rest of human history. For twelve or thirteen hun-

dred years, an elective system, the Jewish economy, was instituted. But this solitary exception, anomalous in its character, has proved a grievous offence to the minds of many. The reasonings of those who reject the authority of revelation, and their ridicule, and their embittered taunts, and their poisoned satire, have been very mainly directed against this fact. The God of the Bible, it is maintained, is a Being who acts on a system of favouritism, who is governed by feelings of partiality, and not by large and generous and universal love. And it would be unfair not to acknowledge, that the language of too many of the advocates of Christianity has often furnished sufficient ground for such an allegation.

The first and grand aim of the Jewish Institute, it is surely not possible to mistake. Manifestly, it was a peculiar expedient, for the preservation of that truth, which, having been twice formally committed to the whole world, had each time been all but lost. The original revelation conveyed to man immediately after the entrance of crime had been re-announced after the deluge. But during the first, and not less during the second period, it had been awfully obscured and corrupted, so that hardly a trace of it, in its genuine simplicity, could

be discovered. The nations had "changed the glory of the incorruptible God, into an image made like to corruptible man and to four-footed beasts and to creeping things." The simple message of forgiveness and mercy was buried out of sight. It was misunderstood or forgotten, and in its stead, vain, and multiplied, and revolting ceremonies had been introduced.

There remained one mode of saving divine truth from utter extinction. Diffused and dispersed over the whole earth, the Divine light had been all but quenched, in the encompassing darkness. The scattered rays, therefore, must be collected and concentrated into one focus. Revealed truth, the common property of all, and therefore the special interest of none, and on this account, almost universally thrown aside and abandoned, must be committed to some one guardianship. It must be placed within a new shelter, and furnished with a new kind of protection. It must be deposited in the hands of some one people, and must be guarded and defended as it had never been before, by national partialities and peculiarities, and by a singular and imposing, and withal significant array of ordinances and ceremonies.

Very evidently, there was supposed in all this,

the selection of some one tribe. In the necessity of its nature the expedient was *elective*, and it could have had no realisation, except on this principle. If such an expedient was adopted at all, one people must be chosen out of all the nations of the earth. In this respect an honour must be conferred on one, in which none of the others could share. Very peculiar advantages also, and very peculiar connection with Heaven, must belong to the selected tribe. But it is never to be forgotten, that from beginning to end, the institution had its origin in Divine care, not for one people, but for the whole world. Of necessity one people was selected, of necessity peculiar honours and peculiar advantages were conferred on them. But the reason, the ground, of the economy was not partiality to one, but ineffable and equal solicitude for all. It was the *world's truth* which the Jews were selected to guard, and it was not for their sakes, but for the sake of the world, and for them only in common with the rest of the world, that the selection was made. As the wisest and most effective method of influencing *the world*, this anomalous, exceptional expedient was introduced, in order that in new and happier circumstances all restriction might in due time be removed, and the light, which ever was the property

of the world, might again be shed upon it, indiscriminately, universally.

It is mournful, even humiliating, to think that Christians have labored to form what was so obviously an exception, into a rule and a principle. This is the more sad, when we dispassionately look into the character of the Jewish institute as a whole, and into the judgment pronounced on it by the apostles of Christianity. That it was a Divine ordination is a sufficient proof that, for its peculiar purpose, it was wise and right and good. But it was essentially a *temporary* expedient, and as essentially it was adapted to the *limited end* which it contemplated, and to the state of the world at the time of its institution. *That* was the religious infancy of mankind, and Judaism was therefore, at its best, an *infantile* system. It was throughout, an appeal to the senses, and to the mind chiefly through the senses. It was besides addressed chiefly to the fears of men, and to their higher principles and feelings chiefly through their lower emotions. It made use of a succession of enlarged pictures (like object lessons,) of imposing forms, of gorgeous and elaborate ceremonies; of peculiar dresses, furniture, localities, and times.

Shall we go back to the state of infancy, now

that we have reached manhood? What was divinely wise and right, as connected with a particular age and a particular end, would be monstrous after that end has been gained and that age has passed away. Shall we long for the pictures and symbols and weaknesses of childhood, now that we are amidst the living reality and maturity of religion? Shall we expect, that the twilight shall reveal a single thing which the day has left in darkness? Shall we import the principles of a temporary expedient into an enduring and universal economy? Shall we explain by Judaism, the higher doctrines and laws of Christianity? The later *may*, *must*, throw a flood of light on the earlier; but it is impossible, in the very nature of the thing, that Judaism can add one particle of light, *in any single direction*, to the doctrines of Christianity, which themselves contain not.

But the twilight is Divine as well as the noon-day, though it would be foolish to place in the twilight, for the purpose of better distinguishing, objects which are already placed in the blaze of day. The Jewish institute was of God; and for its purpose and its age was divinely wise and right and good. For the sake of the world, and as a means of acting upon it, for the sake of preserving for the

world that truth which, universally made known, had been well nigh lost, The Almighty determined to deposit it for a time in the hands of one particular nation. That it was not in vain, we may rest perfectly assured. On the one hand, by this expedient nothing was taken from the general world. All the truth which it retained it had still, as if no such expedient had been introduced. But a new influence, a new motive to inquiry, was set to work, and a new source of information was created. Among the selected people themselves, it is impossible but that a degree of illumination, not otherwise to be attained, must have been reached. Their entire national economy was a training, an education in the highest truth; a school, in which they were brought up to Faith in One Living and True Jehovah, in his Attributes, his Providence, and his Salvation. And we can hardly doubt that the circumstance of such peculiar distinctions enjoyed by one people, of such peculiar pretensions to religious light as they put forth, and still more of such actual religious knowledge as they clearly possessed, must have exerted a powerful influence on surrounding nations, far and near. Even had no direct efforts in any way been made by the Jews themselves for diffusing their religion, surrounding nations would

be impelled to come to them, to inquire and examine. Proselytes to Judaism were not hindered, if they were not directly invited, and multitudes, who had no thought of becoming proselytes, might yet be deeply influenced and extensively instructed. There are a few scattered facts in this connection, which awaken almost unlimited hope. The mission of Jonah to Nineveh, the extensive commercial and political relations of the Jews during the reign of several of their kings, their various and lengthened captivities, and the coming of the Eastern Sages to inquire after the birth of Christ,—all suggest far more than they directly express, in reference to the influence of the Jewish institute upon the rest of mankind.

But it is confessed on all hands, notwithstanding, that the moral condition of the world at the close of the thirteen hundred years was lamentable. Darkness covered the earth and gross darkness the nations; and even the light in the Holy Land was dim and impure. The Jews had abused and corrupted their own economy. Though they had not sunk into idolatry, the prevailing views of the character of God, of the nature of Religion and even of Human Virtue, were miserably false, and the general moral

reputation of Judea could scarcely descend to a lower point than it had reached.

But at least The Great Being had no part in this issue. We behold him only guarding against it, introducing a new and anomalous expedient divinely fitted to prevent it. Throughout, as from the first, His attitude towards Moral Evil was that of an Irreconcilable Antagonist. And now also, if the darkness, ungodliness, and vice of the wide world were such as we have found, at least He was wholly apart from it and opposed to it.

FOURTH EPOCH.

THE MYSTERY OF ALL TIME.

First. An Incarnation of Divinity.
Second. A New Expression and Medium of Infinite Mercy.
Third. A Perfect Humanity.
Fourth. A New Revelation of Spiritual Truth.
Fifth. A New Fountain and Channel of the Divine Spirit.

METHOD OF PROVIDENCE.

MORAL Providence, in the view which we have hitherto taken of it, is prolonged and varied *Education* of the mind and heart of the world. It is a series of merciful appeals to the will of man, a series of divine methods for subduing it and bringing it back to the sway of conscience and of God. It is a continued but ever-shifting contest with moral evil, in order to its correction and extirpation. That the contest had been mightily successful is not to be doubted. If, with all the resistance made to it, and all the corrective discipline directed against it, the crime of the world was yet so vast in amount, what must it have been had it been altogether unresisted or assailed by a less formidable force. In spite of its virulence, its insidiousness, its tenacity, almost indestructibility, the world was truly advancing,—advancing to a destiny of exalted good. The first epoch, with its peculiar moral instrumentality, impelled the human race so far onward in its course; the second epoch witnessed a still greater advance; and the third epoch saw "the fulness of the times," *the filling up and completion of the necessary period*, during which all the introductory and

preparatory discipline through which the world had to pass was conducted, until everything was ripe for the last, the best, the universal, the triumphant form of religion, which is to endure to the end of time.

What the essential meaning and the deep design of this final economy must be, is sufficiently apparent from the nature of all the previous dispensations. *This* is the prolongation and the victorious conclusion of the Almighty's great controversy with human sin; the last step in that moral education of the world which he has been conducting from the first; His last appeal to the will of man; his last method of subduing, restoring, and sanctifying it, and of re-uniting to himself his apostate and rebellious children. And if this be so, it is not to be wondered at, that *here* we behold an unveiling of Divine resources such as the world never before saw and never can see again. The Incarnation and the Cross are the names of two events that stand alone in all Time. Together they form a luminous centre, around which, the history of man arranges itself, —the past all looking towards this central point, and the future all branching out from it. Mystery and Openness, Weakness and Power, Glory and Ignominy, are here in marvellous combination, eloquent of the presence of a wonder-working, an almighty hand.

Before we inquire more minutely into the nature of this last, complex, moral instrumentality, which the Supreme has brought to bear on the world, there is a preliminary question, on which at least a brief attention must first be bestowed. Why was this instrumentality not made use of, at an earlier period in the history of man? If it be so efficient, why were four thousand years suffered to elapse before it was introduced? Why did not The Incarnate appear, at the commencement instead of the end of the ages?

The answer of simple piety to these questions is very short, and withal perfectly satisfactory,—"God's time, is the best." This is entirely sufficient in all cases, in which it is not possible to reach farther satisfaction. In the present instance, however, it may be possible, not simply to believe, but distinctly to comprehend and to exhibit the wisdom and rectitude of the divine procedure; and for ourselves to know—at least in part—*how* and *why* it was that so long a period of time elapsed, before the final dispensation was introduced.

In the beginning of the ages, such a mystery as the Incarnation, and still more the Crucifixion, could have seemed only a gratuitous and wasteful expenditure of divine resources. At that peroid it was

unknown, even unimaginable, what moral evil really was, and with what consequences it was fraught. A corrective, loudly demanded at a later period, had been *then* a mere misapplication. The Evil must first develope itself before its radical nature could be discovered, and before, therefore, the antidote which it really needed could admit of being applied. Evil did develope itself awfully, and showed that it did verily demand for its cure, an unheard-of, a mysterious remedy. In putting it down, The Supreme was acting not for a single generation, but for all the generations of men to the end of time; may we not even imagine, that he was acting for all intelligent beings in the Universe, and so as to correct in the most effectual way that which is the one source of evil anywhere and everywhere? For men's sake, and for the sake of the whole intelligent universe, a complete revelation must be made of what spiritual wrong really was, else it had been only superficially cured and its deep root had been unreached. Our world, therefore, became a place of instruction to the universe,—instruction on the most profound and awful subject. Here *alone* a kind of knowledge, essential to all created intelligences, was to be obtained.

In the abodes of the unfallen and the recovered,

purity is unmingled. In the abodes of the irreclaimably reprobate, vice reigns without a contest. In this world alone both purity and crime are found, and found in direct and direful conflict. Here alone, in all the universe, two mighty spiritual forces are struggling for the mastery. When rival nations are embroiled, are mustering troops and collecting ammunition and arms and all the necessaries of war, and when at last hostile armies take the field, their movements are watched on all sides with trembling interest; the character of their respective leaders is canvassed, the probabilities of victory or of defeat are calculated, and disastrous results to one or to both are predicted. But *here* the conflict is not physical but moral; not between two armed masses, but, between two great principles. The world, human nature, is the battle-field, and the vicissitudes of the fight are to furnish instruction to the universe, both as to moral excellence and as to moral evil. As to evil, especially, instruction is to be given; the endless forms in which it may appear, the positions it may assume, and all its manœuvres and modes of attack. But for this conflict, and its protracted and varied exposure on this field, it never could have been known, or even imagined, what spiritual wrong really was; to what irrationality, debasement, and pollution

it was capable of dragging down the soul; in what enormous ingratitude and what dark abominations it might involve man; what horrible forms it was capable of assuming; how insidious, how endless in resources, and how all but indestructible it was! But all this must be disclosed, and for this great reason chiefly, because otherwise the remedial measures would have seemed premature and have been unappreciated. It *was* disclosed therefore, and not until the world was prepared, was that last and mightiest instrumentality of which God was to make use, developed in all its completeness and its grandeur.

There was manifest wisdom (even necessity) in first bringing all that men themselves could affect, to a prolonged and decisive test before the Most High, in the resistlessness and plenitude of his resources, interposed. For four thousand years, therefore, the utmost power of man was allowed unlimited scope. In every part of the globe, and under every variety of conditions, all that human research, human learning, human genius, human piety, and human virtue could accomplish was put to the proof. That these effected nothing, it would be a libel on the Creator himself to maintain. They were not, and could not, have been useless. So far as they were capable of reaching, they must have been effective; but they

fell short, hopelessly short, of the necessities of the case. One grand object was completely secured by them — the urgent need for higher wisdom and higher power than man's, for divine interposition, was at length wrought into the deepest convictions of the world. It is a well-authenticated historical fact that, at the time of the coming of Christ, not in Judea only, where such a thing might be accounted for on other grounds, but in every part of the world, the intense, agonising desire for help from above was felt; and not this only, but the ardent expectation was even cherished, that the needed help from above was close at hand. Wearied and disappointed, after unnumbered all-but-fruitless efforts, for four thousand years, the world sent up a universal cry for Almighty deliverance. That cry was heard, and the answer to it was given, in the Incarnation and the Cross. The Necessity is first proved and first felt, and then it is divinely provided for. The deep desire is first created, and then it is mercifully met and supplied. A wise father, in dealing with a rebellious son, does not exhaust all his resources at once, does not at first put forth the highest effort which he is capable of making; for, if this should fail, he has then nothing on which to fall back. He advances step by step; rises from the

less to the greater; adopts first one method and then another more likely to have effect, and then another yet more likely still; gradually augmenting the moral influences and forces,—till nothing more remains for him to attempt.

It is not presumptuous to assert that, had Christ appeared in the beginning of the world, it had been vain to have thereafter introduced any of the lesser instrumentalities, which, as we have seen, were in their place so effective. There is a marked progression, a gradual increase of force, in the methods which the Almighty employed in dealing with the world. By slow degrees he opens the magazine of his resources, beginning with the less powerful instruments, and rising at length to the highest and mightiest of all. He brings forth now one expedient and again another; and, at last, after patiently waiting for four thousand years, and having, by the wisest and most effective means, prepared and matured the world, he lays bare the deepest fountains of his own nature, and seeks to subdue man's obdurate soul by a final and mighty effort, by all that is mysterious and awful, condescending, compassionate and godlike, in the fully developed plan of his Moral Providence.

It is not here presumed, to attempt a full-length

exhibition of Christianity as a Power in the Almighty hand for acting on the world. We meditate only an outline, not drawn without care, but imperfectly filled up.

The Power of Christianity is centred in a Being, raised up once in all time, for an end as unique in its character, as it is glorious in all its relations and results. Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the symbol, the dwelling, and the source of all in Christianity which acts with regenerating and reclaiming force on the human soul. Christianity, viewed in this light, and in its essential connection with an actual Person, is as complex as it is mighty; but yet in its complexity it is strictly one—in aim, even in action and in the mighty hand which wields it. It is distinguishable into Five distinct kinds of Instrumentality:—

First. It presents an Incarnation of Divinity.

Second. A New Expression and Medium of Infinite Mercy.

Third. A Perfect Humanity.

Fourth. A New Revelation of Spiritual Truth.

Fifth. A New Fountain and Channel of the Divine Spirit.

INCARNATION.

I. An Incarnation of Divinity—Jesus of Nazareth, God *in* Man—Mighty Instrument, subduing rebellious Will.

The reality of the Incarnation must be here assumed, and it must suffice to sketch a bare outline of the leading facts and of the conclusions which they establish. About eighteen hundred years ago, there lived on this earth a native of Judea, by name Jesus of Nazareth. He was a young man; he was brought up in very humble life; his reputed parents, his relations, and all his associates, belonged to the lower ranks of society. He was a common carpenter, working at his trade till he was thirty years old. At this age, of his own accord, without solicitation or encouragement from any quarter, he appeared in public; and, after a ministry of only three years, he suffered death by crucifixion at the age of thirty-three. His youth, and his entire social circumstances and position, when viewed in connection with his preeminence as a revealer of spiritual truth, with his personal wisdom so far surpassing in amount and in kind that of the most renowned sages, and with his blameless, perfect, unexampled spiritual cha-

racter, make out, as Christians believe, *an essential and organic* difference between *him* and *all men*—a difference not of office but of nature. The evidence of history, and the laws of the human mind, pronounce the *impossibility* of any *mere* man—especially in the circumstances in which he was placed—rising to that wealth of wisdom and that moral perfection which belonged to *Him*. An Incarnation of Divinity, in this unparalleled instance, is alone sufficient—and it is perfectly sufficient—to account for a combination of spiritual phenomena with outward conditions, *never* realised except in Jesus of Nazareth. He must have been Divine as well as human, *the* One Incarnation for all time, God *in* Man? *

In this overwhelming Mystery, we behold a new proof of God's Antagonism to Moral evil—a proof peculiar to the era of Christianity. This was the wondrous instrument, which in the fulness of the times the Great Being brought to bear on the human soul, and with which he came forth to contend with man's perverted and rebellious Will. This is the instrument, which for nearly two thousand years he has been wielding, not against his apostate children,

* For the full development of the argument, of which only a hint is here presented, the author must refer to his work entitled "The Christ of History," &c.

but against their foe, the foe of all created Being. Of necessity, the instrument wholly designed to bear upon a moral evil, and to effect a moral purpose, is itself of a moral nature. The *fact* of Incarnation is also a *truth* appealing to the Reason and the Conscience. Had that fact been physically and externally attended with circumstances, which should have rendered it perfectly irresistible at the time, it would not only have been a contravention of the entire system of providence, but, constituted as human nature is, it must withal speedily have lost its power. The most vivid and overwhelming impressions on the senses, often repeated, and especially long continued, eventually cease to be felt. The extraordinary soon becomes common and fails to excite wonder. Nor can it be overlooked, as the wisest theologians pointedly teach, that the only end of physical miracles is to arouse attention. Moral changes are affected, not through the excitement of the senses, but through the convictions of the understanding and the conscience. The mystery of Incarnation was not for the eye, but for the judgment, the heart, and the moral nature. Evidences of its reality in abundance were furnished, but it was a thing not to be forced irresistibly on the soul, but to be examined, to

be deeply and reverently pondered, and to be embraced on solemn conviction.

Conviction of this Mystery once reached, its necessary effect, at least its necessary tendency, can admit of no dispute. That the Most High had incarnated himself, that he was so profoundly interested in his fallen creatures as thus to come down among them, and in a way to us incomprehensible, to unite himself to human nature, and make it a tabernacle for his wisdom, his purity, his truth, and his love; this fact, these principles, really believed, we can conceive of no instrument so sure to reach, subdue, overwhelm the soul of man. The divine condescension was ineffable. On the other side, the proof of God's antagonism to evil was complete. *His* only connection with it, from first to last, has been in putting it down. But in order to put it down, there is nothing which He is not ready to do. The mystery of all Time shall be unveiled, and the intelligent universe shall behold "God Manifest in Flesh."

THE CROSS.

II. A NEW EXPRESSION AND MEDIUM OF INFINITE MERCY—CROSS, THE POWER OF CHRISTIANITY—SUBDUING MYRIADS—DIVINE INSTRUMENT, EXTERMINATING MORAL EVIL.

THE Infinite mercy of the Almighty had never been unexpressed and destitute of a medium, from the first moment of human crime. But in the Incarnation, and above all, in the Cross, an utterance of this Divine sentiment was given, and a channel for its outflow was opened, such as the world never before had known.

This is not the place, for doing justice to the interior peculiarities of the Christian system. Our business is rather with the outworks and with those broad general views, which no dispassionate inquirer can fail to recognise. In the meantime, it is not too much to assert that the moral recovery of the world, while it was the end of the entire ministry and mission of Christ, must have been still more mysteriously related to his death. For that recovery he often declared, not only that he was *prepared* to sacrifice his life, but that he *expected* nothing less, and

was indeed designated to this issue. In point of literal fact, for this and nothing less, he DID at last sacrifice his life.

Without reasoning on the subject, no unprejudiced inquirer can deny that, from whatever cause, it is emphatically *the cross of Christ*, which has acted as a mighty spiritual force upon the soul of the world. Hardly less undeniable is it that the Cross has thus acted, because it contains the most touching expression of love and mercy, as well as offers the highest evidence of the invincible moral power of the Redeemer. As a simple matter-of-fact, it is the doctrine of crucified love that has triumphed over man, that has been Almighty through God, that has arrested, captivated, regenerated human hearts. Wherever the cross has been wanting, Christianity has appeared shorn of its strength,—an ineffective, lifeless, cold system. Wherever this has been lifted up, even though often associated with egregious human weakness and with serious human errors, it has proved an all but resistless power. The most expressive symbol, the most direct medium, and the chief fountain of the saving energy of Christianity, is the cross.

The doctrine of the forgiveness of sin was not, indeed, new to the world at the coming or at the

death of Jesus. It had been promulgated in Paradise, and from that spot had issued forth, and been circulated over the whole earth. It was the original revelation given to man,—to universal man. But such a basis as was now laid for human trust in it, the world had never seen, such influences and associations as now encompassed it, the world had never experienced, such views of infinite purity, blended with infinite pity, as were now thrown open, had never before been presented. The Great Being, himself caring for all the interests that were at stake, and gloriously providing for them all, promulgates pardon,—free, unconditional, universal pardon; commands, invites, beseeches his guilty children to return to Him, and expostulates and remonstrates with them on the folly, the wickedness, and the utter destructiveness of their course. "God *in Christ* is reconciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses unto men." His great work in the world all along, the one end of his Moral Providence, had been to reconcile, to gain over men to himself. But *in Christ*, in Christ's mission as a whole, in his life, his character, and his teaching, and impressively and mysteriously in his death and his cross, he *is* redeeming men to himself, winning them back, gaining their

affections, reclaiming their perverted wills, and taking possession of their consciences.

In Christ, the world beholds very God, so far as it is possible for Him to be imaged in human form; —God pitying and loving his creatures and adopting a method inexpressibly grand for putting down that evil, which is their disgrace and their perdition; God assuming a nature which was capable of toiling, weeping, bleeding, dying for men's salvation. The spiritual history of myriads of human beings is interpreted by that word, the Cross. They have been arrested by this power, when every other had failed to reach them. Suddenly they have been attracted by an object which, in its deep meaning, they had never before looked upon, Incarnate, Crucified, Dying Love! not dissociated from Infinite Rectitude, Purity, Majesty, and Truth, but rather encompassed and irradiated by these glories. Suddenly, they have caught a glimpse of this Divine Mystery, the Great mystery of Godliness, and never after have they been able to remove their eyes from it—God in Christ; God in an attitude of amazing tenderness and pity, winning back his creatures to himself. The wondrous sight, and the more wondrous truths of which it is the symbol, have taken

entire and permanent possession of their whole being, and reclaimed and renovated their natures. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things have passed away, behold all things have become new."

This is the sacred influence which The Most High, having himself prepared, now wields against Moral Evil, and by which he is expelling it from the soul of man. Intense, Infinite must be His abhorrence of it, when he contrives and puts forth means so stupendous, for effecting its extermination. Not only shall the Mystery of All Time, God manifest in Flesh, be unveiled, but the Incarnate One shall bleed and die on a Cross! There is Almighty Strength in this symbol of utter weakness! There is surpassing glory in this amazing depth of disgrace! There is Life, the Life of the World, in this Death!

Never were more prophetic words uttered than those of the Blessed Saviour of men, and never was prophecy more strikingly fulfilled, than this! "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

III. A PERFECT HUMANITY—IMAGE HELD UP BY GOD BEFORE THE WORLD—TO AFFECT CONSCIENCE AND HEART.

IT would not be difficult, to produce subduing evidence and to create a strong impression of the moral beauty, the spiritual perfection of the character of Jesus.* But it may be pardoned, if here we assume what few have ever dared to question, and if we turn at once to the Divine purpose in this manifestation of spiritual glory.

"If virtue were to descend to the earth, all men would fall down and worship her," said a celebrated Divine, perhaps caring more for the rhetoric than for the accuracy of the sentence. It was replied by a Divine of an opposite school, virtue *did* descend to the earth in the person of Jesus Christ. But all men did not fall down and worship *Him*, but "they took him and with wicked hands they crucified and slew him." Perhaps in the felicity and withal justice of this rejoinder, it was overlooked that the high design of God, in this living impersonation of virtue,

* See "The Christ of History," &c.

nevertheless, was to gain the affections and to secure the worship of the world. And if Jesus did die, it must not be forgotten that he rose again. Virtue was laid in the grave, but after three days there was a glorious resurrection, and the life-picture of human perfection is fresh before the world at this hour. It is an unhappy circumstance, that because one class of theologians have made the example of Christ all but everything, another have sought to represent it, as next to nothing. But that example is alone in the world and in all history, and it is an express Divine product, and for a purpose of transcendent interest. It is hardly possible to overestimate the power to influence the human soul, which lies in the matchless beauty and glory of the character of Christ—the image of human perfection, held up by God himself, before his fallen creatures, in order to win them back to purity and truth. In neglecting this we cast dishonour on a Divine instrumentality, we shut our eyes to one of the chief wonders of Moral Providence, and we turn away from that which is fitted to penetrate to the deepest affections of our souls, and to reclaim and renew our perverted moral nature.

The Unseen Antagonist of Moral Evil employs as one of his merciful and mighty methods of assail-

ing and destroying it this development of human perfection. He brings forth in the sight of the world, a living example of spotless moral excellence. Right in front of fallen humanity, he places an unfallen human soul, in all its attractive and subduing loveliness. He points to a human will, that was always in glad harmony with his will, that always acted faithfully, according to its constitution, and was always determined by the voice of Conscience and Reason. What men ought to be, had often been *declared* in the clearest and strongest language, and indeed was fully known by themselves, for it was written within them by a Divine hand. But words are inexpressive compared with *deeds*. With a point and force which no words could convey, the destiny and the duty of universal humanity were now pronounced in an actual life. The God who hated sin, who only, always, and infinitely hated it, now revealed to men what it was that he loved, and that they ought to love and become. To the *soul* of the world, God was now at pains to speak as he had never done before; to the moral susceptibilities, to all the feelings of the heart, and to the perceptions of the understanding, he spoke in a new and living—would that it had been, as it ought to have been, resistless language!

THE DIVINE MESSAGE.

IV. A New Revelation of Spiritual Truth—Truth, quickening, restoring—Life of Soul—Divine Provision for perishing Humanity.

The inexhaustible opulence of the Christian Revelation makes it necessary, to deal with it either at great length or not at all, and forbids so discursive and brief an examination of it as alone would be possible for us here. Here, also, we begin with an assumption and take for granted the variety, fulness, and grandeur of that message which Jesus Christ announced to the world.* Assuming that the gospels are his message, and that they contain imperishable divine ideas undivulged before, we advance to the position, that these ideas are a new power in the hand of the Almighty, for putting down that which *He* abhors.

In one of its aspects, Moral Evil is ignorance, wilful ignorance, putting away the truth, not suffering the voice of truth to be heard, acting in defiance of it. The Original Sin of our world is represented as ignorance, or false views of The Most

* See "The Christ of History," &c.

High, deliberately false views of The Most High, as if what He had declared might yet prove untrue. This was immediate death to the soul, begun separation from the fountain of all life, the sign, and also the cause, of yet deeper separation and of ultimate ruin. But there is a life, opposed to this death. The antidote takes its character from the evil, the cure from the disease.

Spiritual truth is the medium and even the very material of the Soul's life. Hence it is beautifully and strikingly declared, "This *is* life"—its essence, its substance, that in which it consists—"this *is* life, is Eternal life"—what? Knowledge—"to know thee, the only true God and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." All truth is quickening and restorative. The ignorant mind is a dead mind, and when knowledge is let in upon it, it is like a resurrection from the grave, the beginning of a new career of life, the opening of a new world. In the highest sphere of all, when the fallen will has put aside truth, and has acted in defiance of Conscience and Reason, and the being has thus suffered a literal death-stroke, restoration to Life is no other than the soul's return to truth and its glad acceptance of it. If the origin of death in our world was *false* views of the Almighty, the resurrection to life can only be

by *just* views of The Almighty. The beginning of peace to the conscience, and of purity to the heart, the deep source of all impulses and motives to good, the corrective of the perverse will, the restorative of moral power to its legitimate use is living, spiritual truth. Truth from heaven, shed down on the conscience, the understanding, and the heart is like life from the dead. "The words that I speak unto you," said Jesus, "they are spirit and they are life." Elsewhere he compares them to living bread, of which if a man eat he shall hunger no more, and again to living water, of which if a man drink he shall thirst no more.

The personal ministry of the Redeemer, in this view, was the opening of a deep and exhaustless spring, whose waters, after two thousand years, are as plenteous at this day, as fresh, as living and as vivifying, as when they first gushed from the fountain. In that ministry, to change the figure, we behold God pouring a flood of light upon the world, in which its darkness might be quenched. That truth, by deliberate resistance to which man had fallen, in deliberate resistance to which all sin consists, was brought marvellously near. In new forms, invested with new attractions, through a new medium it was presented, and so plentifully, so

variedly, and so ceaselessly that it might be impossible any longer to darken or to defy it. On all sides, God now poured down light and truth. Man was revealed to himself; his nature, his sin, his danger, his escape, his duty, and his destinies. God was unveiled, in his being, in his attributes, in his merciful purposes, in his Providence, and in his redeeming agency. The plan of reconciliation too was exposed in the open view of the world; its perfect freeness, the consequences of impenitence, the inevitable perdition of the unreclaimed soul, Future Happiness and Future Misery, were proclaimed aloud. And in all this, as if from his own throne, in a voice of ineffable pathos, God cried to the world, "Oh, do not the abominable thing which I hate!"

THE HOLY GHOST.

V. New Fountain and Channel of the Divine Spirit—Strivings of the Holy Ghost—Death destroyed by Contact with Life—Points of Contact multiplied—Outpouring of Holy Ghost—Triumph, the Reign of God in Man.

The world had not to wait for a Holy Ghost, till the unfolding of Christianity. It is imposible to read the books of the Old Testament, with openness and candour, without receiving the impression that they distinctly teach a constant Divine Influence on Man. From the beginning, it was the Holy Ghost that strove with the world,—that was wickedly resisted, but that continued still to strive. The real antagonists in that portentous warfare, of which our earth was the theatre, were the spirit of man and the Spirit of God. The origin of the warfare was the revolt of man from his Maker. But the rebel was not abandoned to his fate. We have seen what various and wonderous methods, in succession, were adopted in addressing the human conscience and intellect; how the Almighty, in the early ages of the world, spoke first in tones of mercy, then in a voice of judgment, and then through the medium of a peculiar and anomalous economy. In each of

these various ways, whatever moral power went forth to affect man, was Divine Power. These were so many means, through which the Infinite One sought to come and did come into contact with the human soul and take possession of it again. Any of these was effectual, only so far as it brought down upon man a sense of God and drew his thoughts and his heart back to God. It could be illuminating, purifying, or quickening, only because it proved to be a medium through which the Holy Ghost touched the soul. The touch of God is life-giving, responsiveness to that touch is the token of restored spiritual animation. But ever, that which *alone* has power, which overawes, penetrates, and subdues, is a sense of God, his reality, his nearness, his almighty influences. In all the primitive forms of religion, as well as in the last and best, it was the Spirit of God *alone* that acted with illuminating and holy power on the world. These primitive forms of religion were not forms merely; a Spirit was in them, a Divine Spirit, *the* Very Divine Spirit; and *that* is ever Mighty, and holy, and luminous, and loving, and Pitying, and Patient.

It has become the mode in these days, within the sphere of classical literature, and in religious writing not of the kind reputed most safe, to exalt the idea

of Spirit, even of the Divine Spirit. An echo of the mighty voice of Scripture has gone out into the world; but it is an echo, and has too often all the distance and the vagueness of borrowed and reflected sound. Mystically and dreamily they talk of the great Spirit of Nature, of a Divine Spirit in everything. There is a sense in which it is true, a grand and holy truth. There is verily a Spirit in every thing, because there is a God everywhere, a God acting, influencing, speaking, revealing himself and bringing himself into contact with his rational and responsible offspring. Everything has an inner meaning, a voice—would we but listen to it—a voice which might come even to the heart. The mountain and the plain, the desert and the verdant field, the sea in its calm and in its fury, the river, the living spring, the humble flower, the moon in her queenly majesty, the sky bespangled with its countless diamonds,—are more than they merely seem. There is a Spirit in them, because there is a God. The open eye, the susceptible soul, takes in their meaning. Man meets in them his Maker,—Divine Power, Beauty, Serenity, Majesty, Purity, Goodness, and Love! He is calmed by the Divine Presence, overawed, solemnised, even instructed and sanctified.

But all this, it cannot be concealed, is yet vague,

uncertain, evanescent. Only in the light of the inspired Volume, does it become a clear, fixed, intelligible, and interpretable reality. There has been, from the beginning, a constant agency of the Spirit of God, through various media, on the understanding, heart, and conscience, of men. *This* has been Power, the only effective moral power, the secret source of all the good that has ever been accomplished, of all the successful resistance which has ever been offered to moral evil, and of all the triumphs which have ever been won in the great conflict.

Moral Death has been overcome only by contact with Life, the Highest Life. The Infinite himself has come near, has descended on the world, as a moving, illuminating, sanctifying, quickening influence. The difference between Christianity and all the economies that preceded it lies in this, that the points of contact between Death and Life have been multiplied; that new fountains have been opened, whence the influences that gladden and heal may gush forth; and that new channels have been constructed, through which these influences may flow out to the world.

Ever before, the world was unripe for a higher manifestation of The Divine. The time had not arrived. Many introductory and preparatory me-

thods were indispensable. An adequate susceptibility must first be created, a deep and irrepressible sense of need must be awakened. Then shall the Creator come down to man, as he had never before done. Then shall the *Power* of the Holy Ghost, in all its resistless energy of Life, descend. At this new era, none of the spiritual influences which in succession had before acted on the world were lost; on the contrary, they were accumulated and concentrated, but an addition of inconceivable amount was made to their number and their force. With inimitable beauty and strength of language, the unfolding of Christianity is described as a plenteous outpouring of the Holy Ghost; and these last times are honoured as "The times of the Spirit," because Divine Influence *then* descended in so many ways and in such vast amount, as had never before been known. The world, at many points at once, and with an awful vividness of impression, felt the touch of The Almighty, and it started, responsive to that touch. Each of the separate parts of that complex instrumentality which Christianity unfolds was a new and mighty medium, whereby The Living One would approach man and act divinely on his nature. The Incarnation, the Cross, the Moral Loveliness of Christ, and The Living Truth which he uttered,

were not only each a reality in itself, but they were, each, the voice, the envelopment, the medium, the chosen instrument of a Mighty Spirit; the illuminating, sanctifying, quickening Spirit, the very Spirit of God. In each of these, and yet more in all of them together, the Holy Ghost descended and directly appealed to men. *Power* was in them, Demonstration of The Spirit, not to be gainsaid. They brought near the sense of The Divine, and left the conviction that God was in them and was by them, moving and acting on men.

Thus it has been for nearly two thousand years; the Holy One, through this mysterious and complicated instrumentality, striving with the world, pouring down the light of truth and the force of love, commanding all the appliances of infinite wisdom, infinite patience and infinite power, and ceaselessly distributing, combining, and modifying moral influences of all kinds, in order that at length man might be won back to his Creator, to duty, to reason, to life.

The actual effect is, on many sides, embarrassing and inexplicable. The world is not Christian, and it reveals to us a marvellous exhibition of the Divine longsuffering in contrast with the impatience and rashness of men. In their puny labours, men fret

and consume themselves, unless they are rewarded by quick success. Eager, bustling, shortsighted, and impetuous, they soon abandon thankless and unproductive labour. The Great Being serenely pursues his mighty work, bestows four thousand years on the preparatory education of the world, and after his plan, with all this preparation, has been fully developed, and all the instrumentalities which his wisdom sees fit to employ have been set to work, *at the end of nearly two thousand years more*, his patience is stretched out still.

It is something to be able to say that, after so long a period, Christianity is even in existence. Few things in this world are two thousand years old, above all, without exhibiting marks of decrepitude and approaching dissolution. Through what has not Christianity passed? During all these centuries the cross has found an enemy in every human heart. The thing itself, the truths which it embodies, the submission which it demands, and the purity, which it enjoins, are a mighty offence. But Christianity has been assailed at every point, by very bitter and determined enemies. Its historical basis, its facts, its doctrines, its moral precepts, its entire spirit as a system, through nineteen centuries, have drawn down on themselves all that learning, and talent, and wit,

and depravity could effect. Christianity, besides, has often borne the assault of direct physical persecution. For some centuries after its birth it knew nothing but persecution. It stands almost the only example of the kind, which the world furnishes—a class of men, no matter where found, no matter to what nation belonging, without aggression on their part, without provocation given, hunted like beasts of prey, for the sole cause of their religion. By the most powerful empire that has ever yet established itself on the earth, persecution, often bloody, merciless, and insatiable, was directed for centuries against it. And it lived on, and was even extended and strengthened.

Not to name the attempt—a most injurious one—which was early made to incorporate with it the peculiarities of Judaism, the new religion was assailed by the ancient philosophies and religions of the world. It was sought to superadd dogmas and forms from more than one of the ancient mythologies, to the heaven-born truth. Christianity was beset, by the gorgeous philosophy of the East and by the mystic speculations of the West. It survived, though it suffered severely from these assaults. But the favour of men was more fatal to it than their hostility. It was caressed and courted, was associated with opu-

lence, with honour, with rank, and became the path to worldly distinction. It drooped from that hour, and withered, and all but expired.

Endless were the strifes and divisions which then sprang up within itself, and by which it was torn in pieces. From the time when it was first flattered by the world, what a tale of pride, of selfishness, of deceit, of lust of power, of earthliness, of cruelty, and of inhuman depravity, has been unfolded. Safe from outward assault, in the lap of indulgence, that which *had been* Christianity, and was still baptized with this name, was converted into the disgrace and the scourge of humanity, a sanctuary of error, a sink of pollution. But it was not Christianity. Real Christianity was and had ever been apart from all this, and in spite of it, had never perished. After nearly 2000 years, notwithstanding the countless and manifold evils by which it has been beset, it survives, and has not grown old. At this hour, it betrays none of the feebleness and sunkenness of age. In all the freshness and vigour of its youth, it yet lives. All sorts of antagonists it has met, all possible forms of assault it has encountered; and at this moment, it is not vanquished but victorious. Having nobly conflicted with every foe, it is but erecting itself to look abroad upon a field which it

shall at last proclaim all its own, and where it shall at last stand, without antagonist, without rival. As yet, it is only working itself forth from evils, which the ages have accumulated upon it. By and by, we shall behold it girding itself for mightier efforts than have before been witnessed, baring its arm and nerving its heart for the universal spiritual conquest of the world.

In our estimate of the religion of Jesus Christ, the basis of our calculations is often incomplete and unsound. Churches, and religious associations of all kinds, and Christians so called, do not constitute Christianity, whether as an effect or as a power. These do indeed constitute the visible, nominal Christianity of the world. But it is forgotten that far, far beyond these, Christian truth and Christian spirit have penetrated in a thousand directions, and exerted a blessed and holy influence. Into the outlying world, if we may so speak, there has gone forth a power whose effects are not to be calculated; for this reason, amongst others, that they are often long invisible, and surprise an observer by the suddenness of their after appearance. No candid person can for a moment doubt, that the secular literature and secular writing generally, of our day, is perfectly different in its tone, from what it was a

century or even half a century ago. There are great principles, and a certain spirit, which find their source nowhere but in the New Testament, which seem to have at last, after ages of hard struggle, thoroughly established themselves in the general mind, never again to be dislodged. And there are, besides, other principles, originating in like manner only in the Gospels, which are as plainly fighting their way to general acceptance, though at present opposed with great vehemence on many sides. Christianity is a system of truths and laws, and every genuine spiritual truth that is rooted among men, and every pure governing principle that fixes itself in the human conscience, is a triumph of the religion of the Redeemer. One by one, Christian truths and Christian laws are advancing to the sovereignty of the world. Slowly but surely, they are advancing. We look for their universal reception. The dominion secured of all true, and wise, and pure, and righteous, and generous, and divine principles—in other words, the reign of God in Man established, Christianity has reached its highest design. This is the restoration of a revolted world, the salvation and recovery of abused Moral Power. The original cause and source of moral evil is put down, God is triumphant, Man is blessed.

SECTION THIRD.

THE DESTINY OF THE MORAL UNIVERSE.

OUTER DARKNESS—UNIVERSE OF LIGHT—UNIONS OF ETERNITY—BENEVOLENT AGENCIES—SPIRITUAL ENERGY—SELF-DEVELOPMENT—STUDIES OF THE FUTURE—INTERMINABLE PROGRESS—MENTAL, MORAL LIFE—PERFECTION, BLESSEDNESS—"LIFE ETERNAL."

PATRIARCHISM in its primitive and its later forms, and Judaism, belong to the past; and so, one day, shall Christianism, with its complex and mighty agency. These have been instruments for a purpose; the purpose gained, the instruments are honoured in the success, and no longer employed. The varied economies and disciplines of spiritual providence on earth are not to be everlasting; the entire earthly state of being is essentially temporary and preparatory. The existing world in its social, civil, moral, and religious relations, is everything to the race that now peoples it; but there have been thousands of such worlds since time on earth began, each with the same eager, burning, absorbing interest in life. *They* have gone, as that which now is shall surely go, but they have not dropped into the abyss of annihilation, to rise no more. A thousand times, and a thousand times again, a human population as vast as that which now covers the globe has vanished from "the seen," but only to reappear in "the unseen." This earth is ever

emptying itself; "the unseen" is ever peopling and multiplying in a ratio which defies calculation. How grand, sublime, overwhelming the congregation of the disembodied in the mysterious spirit-world! Is it lawful, is it possible to imagine by the aid of such hints as the Christian Scriptures suggest, the mode of being, the system of things in that inscrutable sphere? above all, the mode, the system of being that shall reveal itself when *The End* shall have come—when the roll of providence shall have been opened out to its farthest limit—when earth with its economies, and spiritual agencies, and disciplines, shall be numbered with the things that were but are not—when the pathway between the two eternities shall have been for ever closed—when the knell of Time shall have been struck, and Eternity evermore shall encircle creation? What is the final destiny of Man, of created Moral Being?

If, from the first, mingled light and darkness have fallen upon the universe so far as it is known to us, shall the darkness be perpetuated even in "the Future," and shall Eternity be begloomed with evil for ever unconquered, unconquerable? In the present crisis of *theological speculation*, it is not presumptuous to assert that a fair criticism of the language of the Christian Scriptures has not yet been

satisfactorily made to appear consistent with the idea of the non-eternity of evil. But all the reasonings we have attempted to conduct, and all the principles we have sought to establish throughout this discussion, go to the conclusion that with evil, except for the sake of diminishing its amount and destroying its force, the Holy and Good Being has no connection, here or hereafter. Except under this condition, no *Divine* agency can be put forth—no *Divine* agency is needed. Always, everywhere, Moral Evil is its own punishment, punishment sufficiently awful without any foreign interposition; and such, withal, that no agency, not even that of the Almighty, could prevent it from descending.*

Perhaps on the principle of the perpetuation of evil in the future, in a form which we cannot compre-

* It ought to create no difficulty to intelligent piety, that the punishment of sin is represented in the Scriptures, as the act of God. So far as respects the forms of physical evil on earth, we have seen that this is literally true. And if, in the wider and deeper sense, sin be its own punishment, it is nevertheless a right and fitting thing that it should be so; and this necessity is not *contrary*, but altogether *according* to the will of God. It is an Eternal law, which commends itself to Infinite Wisdom. The result, therefore, though not caused by God, takes place under his government, and may naturally and intelligibly be connected with his agency.

hend, there may arise a possible relation to the Moral Stability of The Universe. Fear and Love are the two grand forms of motive to created Mind; they are the two pillars on which created virtue rests. Beyond this earthly state, there may be presented to the redeemed and the unfallen, what shall teach them as nothing else could, the nature and the enormity of crime. The Universe shall contain a type of sin *in its last results*,—an image of the doom which is condensed in that tremendous word, perdition. The thought is unutterably affecting. Far, far without—not beyond the range of celestial vision, but not obtruding upon it—there may be a dim and dark and mysterious phantasm; the only speck in a universe of light, and too remote withal to cast upon it even the faintest shadow.

But, without overstepping the literal fact, it may be maintained that, when the entire scheme of Moral providence has been unrolled and fulfilled, the only created existence shall be "The Universe of Light"—Multitudes, past all reckoning, all conception; countless, perhaps, even as separate orders; multitudes of beings, luminous and luminiferous, blessed and pure, united in a harmony never to be disturbed. The ultimate destiny of the Moral Creation, in the view of Reason, is a condition of vast,

select, permanent, spiritual union. Society in The Future shall be the noblest and the most august that can be conceived. That Future we now represent as the dark unknown. It is truly so to us in many of its aspects, and he is not wise who is not overawed by the thought. When we stand by the bed of the dying it seems to us as if they were to be cut off from all they had known and loved, as if they were leaving home and venturing into a strange land; and with bitter tears we bid them farewell. But *the very truth* is, that a disembodied human mind, passing into the Future, finds not strangers, but friends; and receives the congratulations of wise and great beings, the holy welcomes offered by warm and noble hearts. Friendship on earth is the selectest human good. But it is rare. The direct, perfect fellowship of heart with heart, mind with mind, conscience with conscience, soul with soul, is seldom realised on earth, perhaps never. But it is the *destiny* of all the good. Every mind, within the vast range of holy Being, shall be worthy of confidence, of respect, and of love, and shall be ready to return the tribute in the largest measure. Angelic natures, with their opulence, their purity, their simplicity, their ardour, and their strength, shall supply an inexhaustible

source of noble friendships. Human nature, revealed in men, gathered out of all nations, and ages, and states of society, men who have passed through all kinds of discipline, and reached all kinds of perfection, shall offer a field vast enough for eternity. Angelic and human beings shall present wondrous forms of mental and moral excellence, ravishing spiritual beauties, attractive and endearing virtues, priceless worth!

And this sacred fellowship shall for ever be the scene of mutual and mighty spiritual influence. The elder sons of creation must have much to impart to the younger, and even the younger, out of their limited earthly experience, shall be able to interest, perhaps also to instruct, the elder; each in his degree may be at once a receiver and an imparter of truth and of holy impulse. It would degrade the Eternal Future to conceive of it as mere enjoyment, of however exalted a kind. There shall be occasion and scope for the highest occupation of all the benevolent affections.

At the same time, and quite in harmony with this fact, self-development must be regarded as the end and aim of created moral being; and with this, while it bears first on the individual, the common elevation and progress of the whole are identified.

Mind is essentially active, and the Future is distinctively the world of mind. The Christian doctrine of a resurrection pointedly excludes the attribute of animal life from the material part of the human being in another state. Animal life quenched in the grave is never more to be rekindled. The only *life* above shall for ever be mental life. And, until the resurrection, the Unseen is literally and altogether a world of minds.

Perhaps this conclusion, to a certain class of associations and to certain modes of thinking, may be scarcely welcome. A world only of mind suggests the idea of perfect quietude, a state of motionlessness, unproductiveness, coldness, and silence. It is difficult for us to conceive of activity, except in connection with agitation and noise and outward product. There must be something for the hands, for the voice, for the physical energies, something to be done, to be produced, something that the eye can see, a palpable, outward reality. But we forget that the very highest form of activity is pure mental activity; or, rather, that there is no activity, nothing that deserves the name, except of mind: all else is only semblance, shadow, form, type; the substance and reality are in mind. Thinking is working; the most energetic, productive, vital thing in the universe is thought; at the basis of

every product, plan, work, is thought: the cause of all action, of all motion, is thought; and when we say that the Future is the world of mind, that is, of thought, we do in the same breath convey that it is activity in its highest possible form.

The illimitable range of truth, above all, of spiritual truth, shall lie spread out for investigation before intelligent Beings. This shall constitute the Study of Eternity, the grandest, noblest consecration of the most exalted Created Powers. And in this, there is not only an object to occupy and to draw forth the energy of the spiritual nature, but also a medium of the most extended spiritual development. Amidst the studies and the activities of Eternity, each spirit shall work out its own sublime destiny, develope its unknown capabilities and resources, reveal ever-new intellectual and moral beauties, evolve ever-new mysteries and new glories; and thus invest the region in which these come forth with new grandeur and new sanctifying power, to delight the eye of God himself, and to exalt his creatures' conceptions of his inexhaustible opulence and of the hidden wealth of the workmanship of his hands.

Immensity, the dwelling-place of minds, must be a profound and vast silence—silence never to be disturbed; but the symbol of an underlying energy,

individual and social, which shall know no intermission, but shall become ever more intense and more resistless with the revolutions of eternity. The most overwhelming, although the simplest idea, which we are able to form of Power, is in connection with *Silent* Life, the Life of the Infinite Being. Before all worlds, in his own Eternity, God was Life! A Living Mind! Thought, Affection, Conscience, Will! no more! The Infinite Mental and Moral Life!

For us it is hardly possible to conceive of *mere life* as a blessing—at least an exalted blessing. It is so associated in our minds with its accidents, with the objects of sense by which it is surrounded, with occupations and interests out of itself, with external sources and materials of enjoyment, that, if these be taken away, what remains seems to us scarcely worth possessing But Life itself—silent life, mental, moral life, away from all its accidents—*simple existence to a rational and moral being* is a Blessed, a Glorious, and a Mighty thing.

Life — Mighty, Energetic, Silent Being — is the Destiny of the Created Moral Universe; yet not absolutely dissociated from all that may be called accidental or adventitious. In the case of one order of intelligent beings, redeemed human

minds, this is emphatically true. *Their* life, in its very source and cause, shall supply accidents, hardly less precious than the substance itself, with which they are associated. Theirs is Life pointing back to a death—the death of the Incarnate One. The Incarnation and the Cross do all but make up part of their moral being, so deeply are they connected with their moral history. *Theirs* is Life begotten of Love, Incarnate, Redeeming, Crucified Love. It is Life given back from an awful perdition. It is the life of minds *re*-united to God, after a dark apostacy. It is life restored to the Parent Life, as it ought never to have been separated. Away from all its specialities, and in common with that of Angelic natures, and with the Entire Being of the created Moral Universe, it is Life *from* God, *in* God, as the stream contains the waters of the fountain—"We are made partakers of a Divine Nature." It is Life in its highest, purest, noblest sense, realising the very conception of it in the mind of God. It is life in all the opulence, freshness, and glory of the original Divine Idea—Eternal Life. "This *is* Life Eternal, that they might *know* thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." *Living* is *knowing—getting* to know the highest, grandest truths, which yet we never can *perfectly*

know. The kingdom of truth is illimitable, and *He* who reigns in it is "The Incomprehensible," not only unknown, but unknowable. To the central effulgence of God we can never come, only to the edge of the shadow cast by the Infinite we shall reach; but that is the very place of adoration. Now and again, as we prostrate ourselves there, a gleam shall dart through the darkness and tell us that there is a Sun, but also that it is never to be looked upon face to face. Distant, straggling hints of the Great Truth, unutterably precious, we shall be able to collect; but there shall be a Reality beyond, Absolutely Infinite, which must for ever be far more *unknown* than known. The hints we gain shall point to that Infinite Reality, and belong to it. We shall treasure them, and continue to adore and wait. Another and another feeble but precious ray shall fall on us and encourage us to watch still for the Sun. Life in the immortal world shall be no other than this, to rise higher and higher towards that height which we can never climb, because it is Infinite, leaving below us as we ascend a depth which there is no line to fathom, while around us stretches an expanse measureless as Eternity. Yet is it no doubtful striving, to which the Future invites, which it promises; but, on the contrary,

an interminable series of crowding and brightening successes. Every step shall be a true advance, every effort a triumph. Overawed, but not disheartened by the conviction that "The Infinite," whether as Truth or as Being, is never to be known, we shall be enraptured by the deep assurance that "The Knowable" of God, Eternity shall not exhaust. Ever brighter, ever grander, ever more ravishing, more strengthening, and more sanctifying shall be our conceptions of spiritual truth and of "Him who is past finding out!"

NOTE.—While these sheets were passing through the press, the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, for last January, was shown to me by a friend. Amongst others, there is in it an article on Sin, containing a review of a recent work by Dr. Squiers, of America. That work it is my misfortune never to have seen. But it delights me to learn from the review, that in one point—*the inpreventability* of Sin—Dr. Squiers maintains the view which is put forth in this volume.

THE END.

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